THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor: R. PALME DUTT

Volume 9 March, 1927 Number 3

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The Need for One Mineworkers' Union
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The World of Labour :: Book Review

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NOTES of the MONTH

New Capitalist Offensive — Preparations — Peace Offensive — Military Acts—Single Imperialist Policy—Imperialism versus Nationalism—Sham Offers—Policy of Force—Responsibilities—Foreign Office Touts—Smoothing Way for War — "Left" Imperialism — Labour and China, 1924, 1925-1926 — Mediation and Neutrality—Pacifism—Working Class Policy—The Chinese Revolution—Unity with the Chinese Revolution.

THE Conservative Government is calculating in 1927 to repeat on a world scale the victory which it achieved in the British home field in 1926. With the aid of the favouring international situation, with the partial success of the Locarno policy in Europe, and of the encirclement of the Soviet Union, while the United States is primarily concerned in its own imperialistic designs in Central America and seeming prepared to leave British Imperialism a free hand in its campaign, and while the resistance of the workers at home is believed to be broken for the time being by the victory of the previous year and by the abject servility and industrial peace propaganda of the reformist leadership, British capitalism hopes to be able to strike a smashing blow at the forces of liberation all over the world, directly at the Chinese struggle for freedom, the foremost representative of the colonial peoples, and indirectly—perhaps also directly—at the Soviet Union, the leader of the workers, of all the oppressed masses and of the fight for Socialism all over the world. The struggle that hangs over 1927 threatens to eclipse even the struggle of 1926. And it is preceded by the same ominous signs. As in 1926, so in 1927 the Government precedes its attack by a diplomatic peace offensive in words. As in 1926, so in 1927 the Government combines its diplomatic peace offensive in words with the most visible war preparations in deeds. And as in 1926, so in 1927 the official Labour movement meets the Government's open offensive with the same professions of trust in the

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Government's words of peace, with the same open co-operation with the Government by the Right Wing and the same verbal and barren passive opposition on the part of the reformist Left, with the same confusing of the issues and attempts to chloroform the action of the workers in the face of the threatened fight. The vigorous campaign begun by the revolutionary Left (which has already shown the strength of its agitation in the compelling of the Parliamentary Labour Party to adopt an attitude of partial opposition) needs all the strength that can be summoned behind it to enable the British working class to meet and counter this new and more dangerous capitalist offensive of 1927.

THE offensive of 1927 is the sequel of the campaign of 1926. Already at Locarno in 1925, in the Communist trials and in the coal subsidy the preparations were laid. At the time Locarno was treated by the Labour Party as a "stage to peace," and acclaimed by the Second International as "a partial success in the fight of the working class against methods of violence." The actual meaning of Locarno should now be beginning to be clearer. The Conservative Minister's statement at the time that it represented "the solidarity of Christian civilisation" against "the most sinister growth that has arisen in European history" should now be less mysterious; the reported joke of Briand and Chamberlain that they had founded the "Fourth International" to counter the Third should now be clear enough. It is obvious to all to-day that Britain counts on having squared France, Germany, and Italy, and by a series of *coups d'etat* established its influence in all the Border States so as to be able to bring a direct menace to bear on the Soviet Union. In this the reformist leadership and the Second International have helped by their support of the Pact, and by their campaign of incitement to intervention against the Soviet Union (the Kautsky memorandum). In the same way the defeat of the working class at home was a no less necessary part of preparation: and here again the reformist leadership has assisted, not only by their direct betrayal of the struggle last year, but by their inculcation of the spirit of defeat and impotence and the impossibility of further struggle thereafter and at the present time.

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ALTHOUGH Baldwin's "Peace In Our Time" speech in the spring of 1925, which was hailed by the Labour Party as a "wonderful appeal" and the beginning of a "new spirit," was only the prelude and diplomatic preparation of the attack that culminated in Red Friday; although the Samuel Report in 1926, which was again hailed by the Labour leaders as an epoch-making document and the beginning of a new era in industry, was only the prelude and diplomatic preparation of the attack that came in May; yet once again in 1927 the Chamberlain Christmas Memorandum and January offer to the Chinese Nationalist Government is acclaimed by the official Labour Movement as a herald of a new spirit, the triumph of peace and conciliation, "cannot be sufficiently admired and approved" (Labour Party Executive Manifesto, quoting Vandervelde), "sagacious and tolerant . . . plainly the right course" (Brailsford), "admirable . . admirable . . excellent" (MacDonald), and the rest of it. Once again the policy of Conservative Imperialism on the eve of its offensive has been held up by this "Labour" opposition for the admiration of the workers.

IT was only when the accompanying movement of ships, troops, and guns, which had in one form or another been going on for months, became so blatant and obvious, and the consequent working-class agitation so insistent that it could not be denied, it was only then that a change of front was adopted, simple-hearted bewilderment was expressed at the "contradiction" of the Government's policy and the theory was evolved that the Government was pursuing two conflicting policies, and that the admirable policy of the Foreign Office was being interfered with by the jingo policy of the War Office. "Which is the true policy of the Government?" asked the troubled *Daily Herald* leader-writer. "I sniff," declared the sharp-nosed MacDonald," in these communiqués of military preparations an air quite different from that of the Foreign Office communiqués." Yet even so it was not the military measures that were complained of, but only the excessive and over-conspicious manner of them. The National Joint Council, in its telegram to Chen, "deplores the flaunted military demonstrations . . . likely to thwart the policy of

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negotiation and amicable settlement which our Foreign Office appeared to be pursuing." So the hypocrisy is maintained to the end, to the very edge of war.

YET never was any policy so obviously single and uncontradictory in all essentials as the policy of British Imperialism in China. There may be differences and controversies in tactics, as in all wars and class struggles, differences of endeavouring to trick and break up the enemies' ranks by bogus offers of compromise, or to smash them outright by superior strength, differences dependent on the situation and on the grouping of forces in the enemy's camp. But the policy, the war aim, remains obviously one and the same throughout—to maintain the British Imperialist hold on the Chinese masses by every possible means, to maintain the exploiters' stranglehold through whatever political mechanism can guarantee secure functioning and secure dividends. Hitherto this process has required an elaborate military despotic apparatus—foreign law courts, foreign garrisons, foreign enclosures and supra-legal rights, foreign warships, guns and troops for bullying purposes, foreign punitive expeditions, massacres and atrocities at regular intervals, and foreign-subsidised war lords to repress popular movements and prevent the emergence of national consciousness. But if the same purposes can be achieved more cheaply through the recognition of a "sane" Nationalism, whether through a reactionary single ruler of the type of Yuan Shih Kai, or through the upper-class administration of a foreign-enslaved "republic," they will be prepared to do so and even gradually to remove the extraordinary military and supra-legal buttresses, in proportion as the position is seen to be secure without them, that is, as the extraction of dividends and sweating and squeezing of the people is securely protected under the "national" administration.

BUT with a genuine Nationalism, with a Nationalism based on the masses, on the workers and peasants, with what they call a "bolshevistic" Nationalism, Imperialism can never make peace: the only relationship of Imperialism to genuine Chinese Nationalism is war, open or concealed. And,

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therefore, because they suspect that the Chinese Nationalism with which they have to deal, the Nationalism of the Kuomintang, of Canton, of Sun Yat Sen, the Nationalism which has swept over half China and whose people's armies are received everywhere by the masses as their deliverers, is a genuine popular Nationalism, they fear and suspect and hate it, and, even at the same time as they send their polite smooth-spoken emissaries and spurious offers in the hope of drawing off the Right Wing upper-class elements, they send their warships and their troops for the real fight.

BUT in fact the British offer is not even the most limited pretence of an offer of formal national rights. The actual text is so hollow and threadbare that it is amazing that the Foreign Office and its Conservative-Liberal-Labour spokesmen have been able to get away with the myth that it offers the essence of the national demands or even meets the Nationalists "half-way." None of the British extraordinary rights and privileges is in reality surrendered; the essence of all is jealously maintained. The two outstanding types of question may be taken: the concessions and extra-territoriality. There is no offer to abandon the concessions. Instead it is proposed that they should be administered by joint Chinese-British authorities, and it is pointed out that this does not apply to Shanghai. What is the effect of this? The offer applies to two concessions of importance, Hankow and Tientsin. Of these the latter is in the territories of the foreign-subsidised Chang, so that this part of the offer is only a gift to the enemies of the Nationalists. The other is in the hands of the Nationalists already. Thus the "generous offer" amounts in practice to the cool proposal that the Nationalists should hand back the concession which they have won, and at present control alone, to be jointly controlled with the British. If this is Mr. Chamberlain's idea of "generosity," it is fortunate that he did not decide to be exacting. With regard to extra-territoriality, it is not even proposed to abolish the British law courts. It is suggested that in civil and commercial cases, where a Chinese is the defendant, the Chinese law courts may be recognised which apply the modern type of civil and commercial code. And that is all. This is another true bagman's "bargain." And this is the

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sort of stuff that is hawked round for propaganda purposes in England as "the limit of concession," "generous recognition of Chinese Nationalism" and the rest of it, and accepted as such by the Labour shoddy-merchants.

THE fact that British Imperialism is not even prepared, despite all its loudly-boomed policy of conciliation and recognition of "reasonable" national demands, to grant even the barest appearance of formal national rights shows how completely the real weight of the policy lies in the guns, with the diplomacy as a manœuvring adjunct and conscious sham. British Imperialism has shown by this how completely it is hostile to Chinese Nationalism, how completely it is conscious that the iniquitous privileges and monopolies, shameless robberies and exactions of its existing regime in China will not be able to maintain themselves under any healthy Nationalist rule where there is the slightest possibility of expression of the popular will, but can only be maintained as they have been maintained for the past three-quarters of a century, by bloody violence. And the British reformist Labour leaders, by their support of the decoy policy of Chamberlain, which has not even one-tenth of the plausibility of the Samuel Report sham, by their crying up the pacific character of this policy, lulling the workers, throwing doubts on Chinese Nationalism as the only obstacle to peace, fulsome praise of every British diplomatist, venomous references to every Chinese leader and above all to the Chinese workers, and endeavour actually to damp down and suppress independent agitation in Britain, have not only made themselves the adjuncts and abettors of the Foreign Office and of Conservatism, but have in fact made themselves the adjuncts and smoothers of the way of the policy of bloody violence.

WHATEVER lives are lost in China through the sending of the British troops (in addition to the tens of thousands of Chinese already killed by British guns), whatever lives Chinese or British are lost, will lie at the door of every Labour leader and journalist, Right or "Left," who has endorsed the Chamberlain Memorandum, who has

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given his guarantee of the pacific character of British policy and who has sought to lull the necessary agitation in Britain until after the troops had got safely away. On January 21, five days after the decisive military conferences of the heads of the forces and the Imperial General Staff and the Cabinet decisions, when the marines were already embarking at Portsmouth and the cruisers and troopships were under orders, MacDonald took on himself to declare to the readers of the *Daily Herald*, that is, directly to the Labour Movement: "It may be assumed that there is no intention whatever of any Western or foreign Eastern Power fighting the Canton army. It is not there the danger lies." Thus at the very same time as British Imperialism is letting loose all the instruments of war and death against the Chinese masses, the leader of the British Labour Movement is engaged in giving fictitious paper "guarantees" to the British workers that all is well and there is no danger. Only when the troops have been safely got away, then come the fictitious paper "protests," the "disillusionment" and the rest of the ancient and ugly game, and even so with safeguarding clauses that the decision must rest with the Government, that British lives must be protected, that "if war comes," "we" must see it through, and the rest of it. Thus the rôle of reformism in relation to imperialism and war is played over and over again.

IT is not only a question of the Right Wing leaders who, like MacDonald and Thomas, are obviously nothing but Foreign Office touts, receiving their daily instructions from official headquarters, and repeating them like gramophones—all the time with a more or less anxious eye (more, in the case of MacDonald, less, in the case of Thomas) on how the movement will take it. The official Labour leadership has in the present crisis followed the Foreign Office with such slavish closeness as to raise something near revolt in their following. They did not even profess to recognise the claims of Chinese Nationalism and Canton until the Foreign Office gave the cue. It was on December 3 that Lampson arrived in China and proclaimed the "new" policy. On December 4 Lloyd George came out with his Bradford speech. On December 5 the *Observer* rang in the new regime with noisy peals: "No

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Gunboat Policy"; "the southern armies embody the idea of real national unity and sovereignty"; "probably a sweeping majority of the whole population is already on their side"; "there is no way out but conciliatory compromise with the Chinese people." And then at last on December 7 MacDonald gave his interview on New China to the *Daily Herald*: "The time has come when the Powers ought frankly to recognise that a New China has been born"; "the Canton Government has reached a point when we can recognise it." Has reached a point? When "we" can recognise it? And why not earlier? Why not in 1924, when "we" sent gunboats instead to Canton? Why not in 1925, when the Second International was warning the Chinese against the dangers of "Asiatic Nationalism"? In what sense had the Kuomintang and Canton changed in December, 1926, that the justice of their claims could suddenly be discovered? In one sense only. Their guns had reached the Yang-Tse. Like a true pacifist, MacDonald as a faithful pupil of the Foreign Office can always discover the justice of claims—as soon as they are backed by guns. (Indians, who suffered from the knout of MacDonald in 1924, will note the point.)

WHAT has followed? A consistent praising of Conservative Imperialist diplomacy. A consistent attack on the Chinese mass struggle. "The Canton Government is in a truculent mood." "A mere scuttle" is out of the question. During negotiations "ordinary precautions for safety must be taken." "Anti-British hatred." "What is any Government to do under those circumstances?" "Is the jackboot to be applied to us alone?" "Does the Canton Government want an amicable settlement?" "If you cannot control mobs, no efforts of ours can prevent trouble." No wonder that the Imperialist *Daily Telegraph's* correspondent in Pekin was able to report that MacDonald's efforts "earn approbation here," or that their leader writer could declare: "We are able to quote Mr. MacDonald with satisfaction." Even when the pressure of the movement compelled the demand for the withdrawal of troops, how do we find it expressed? "All that his honourable friends who had acted with him had done was to doubt whether as a matter of

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fact they had increased the risk or on the other hand increased the security of our people in Shanghai." There is no question of the Chinese millions at issue; there is no question of the crime of sending guns and troops against the Chinese masses, who are seeking nothing but their own freedom; all this would be nothing in the scale if "the security of our people in Shanghai" (numbering 9,300) were really increased; the only question at issue, in the definition of the Labour leader, is the correct measures to be taken for the benefit of "our people in Shanghai"—the handful of agents of the exploiters and sharks engaged in maintaining the apparatus for squeezing the blood and life out of the Chinese workers, women and children.

BUT it is not simply a question of the Right Wing leaders. Throughout the upper strata of the movement the same basic outlook recurs in a hundred forms, the same disguised imperialist superiority which is at the root of reformism, the same identification of the interests of the British workers with their masters, the same credulous trust in the British Foreign Office, the same patronising distrust of foreign coloured masses. It is not merely that a journal like *Lansbury's Labour Weekly* preaches docility to the workers to follow in the wake of "the united movement" "led by MacDonald" (where to? into the Foreign Office back garden?); "if you want an embargo" (the journal has no opinion on the question; it is a matter of taste) "you will only get it through pressure on your Executives" (that should stop any danger of action all right until three years after the war is over; everybody knows that the "Jolly George" was stopped by "pressure on your Executives"). This is so far only the usual sheepish interpretation of "discipline." But when it comes to the editorial treatment of such a typical incident as the Hankow incident, the viewpoint is exactly the same as MacDonald and the same as the imperialists and the Foreign Office. The Chinese revolutionary demonstration is "a Chinese mob." For the British marines obeying their orders "we owe a vote of congratulations to our comrades in the navy." Let us transpose the situation. The miners on strike hold a demonstration with speeches: there is a good deal of anger with blacklegs, though

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not a hair of any is hurt. Troops are called out with fixed bayonets against the unarmed miners; they kill three and wound others (the Foreign Office denies the killed, while admitting the wounded: as the Chinese authorities give the names of those killed, and conducted their funerals with a mass demonstration, while the veracity of the Foreign Office in such matters is notorious, it is natural to believe the Chinese): the indignation of the miners is terrific, nevertheless their discipline is such that they do not fall into a senseless conflict. And then a "Labour" paper comes out with a description of the miners as a "mob"; "our congratulations to our comrades in the army"! It is filthy that it should be necessary to transpose this situation into English terms in order to show what this kind of conduct means.

BUT indeed this goes much further. It is only necessary to turn to the situation immediately preceding the present crisis to see the typical treatment of the Chinese struggle —the greatest and most significant revolutionary world struggle since the Russian Revolution. The record of the Labour Government to China in 1924 is a gunboat record paralleling its record in India.[1] In 1925 the Shanghai shootings produced from the Amsterdam International and from *Vorwaerts* a declaration on "The Disturbances in China" to the effect that the imperialists "have contributed not a little to the culture and economic progress of the Far East"; "it is doubtful whether the Chinese authorities could at the present moment be unreservedly trusted to protect foreigners." Is there any suggestion—in 1925—of recognising Chinese independence or withdrawing the troops? Not at all. "The Powers will be wise to provide better and more civilised conditions of labour." Otherwise "the movement will get out of control." What typical upper-servants' advice to the slaveowners! Or take the Labour Party and General Council resolution of

[1] It is remarkable that the Independent Labour Party journal *Forward* should at the present moment, at the height of the British Imperialist attack on China, devote columns of its space—constituting the greater part of its space devoted to the Chinese question—to an endeavour to whitewash the notorious record of the Labour Government in China, which the innocent Editor, with the simplicity of a new-born babe, professes never to have heard of before.

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June, 1925. Is there any suggestion of recognising Chinese independence and withdrawing the troops and warships? Not at all; the "point" had not yet "been reached" (that is, the Nationalist armies had not advanced sufficiently). Only two proposals are made: (1) to carry out the recommendations of the Shanghai Child Labour Commission (for a twelve-hour day for ten-year-old children); (2) to hold an "international conference on British initiative" for ending the extra-territorial regimes "as soon as possible," utilising for this the Tariff Conference under the Washington Treaty (this chimed in with Foreign Office policy at the time). Thus Chinese independence has to be won at the point of the bayonet, not only from British Imperialism, but also from the reformist British Labour leaders who are the only polite mouthpiece of their own imperialism.

IN 1926, when Chinese Nationalism was fighting for life against the foreign-subsidised and largely British-subsidised counter-revolutionary armies, supported by the direct aid of foreign and British warships, we find a journal such as the *New Leader* coming out with a complacent article of amused and puzzled indifference at the whole meaningless fighting. "Ah Sin at War with Himself." "For months and years past various hosts of armed men have been trampling to and fro over China. Sometimes they have swept from the north, sometimes from the south, with the wandering uncertainty of locusts, and apparently with a similar aim." "Why do living men combine to live or die for Chang or Wu or Feng? . . . Why should any human soul among the indistinguishable millions of China care to risk life and all for one of them?" And the writer maunders along to the conclusion that it is probably like "our weary old Wars of the Roses." It would be difficult to find an expression more completely revealing the utter boorish self-centred indifference to every living human struggle, that is the heart and soul of the imperialist psychology in the labour aristocracy and the petty bourgeoisie, regarding every event as sensation material in the newspapers, completely unconscious of its own objective world position and responsibility, looking on with contemptuous indifference at the curious incomprehensible inferior races, "Chinks"

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(yes, the article, true to type, speaks of " Chinks ") and the like, " indistinguishable millions." It only remains to add that in the same period of desperate struggle of Chinese Nationalism, when the National armies were having temporarily to yield ground, and the imperialist attempted combination of Chang and Wu was in preparation, and Otto Bauer was already writing with crocodile tears of " China's 1849," the " left " journal, *Lansbury's Labour Weekly*, came out with an article denouncing Feng, the head of the National armies in the north, who had publicly proclaimed for a policy of unity with the international working class against imperialism, as an " adventurer," and—praising Wu as the best of the bunch : Wu, the chosen representative of British imperialism, subsidised with British money and fighting under cover of British warships, whom the British Consul-General at Hankow, according to Colonel Malone, spoke of as " in his pocket." (It would be interesting to know what led *Lansbury's Labour Weekly* to insert this piece of British imperialist propaganda, equivalent to boosting Kolchak during the Russian revolutionary wars, or whether it was done through the simple stupidity of blind anti-Communism.)

EVEN at the present moment, when the unmasked war-preparations of British imperialism and the intensity of working-class agitation have compelled a show of recognition of the Chinese struggle, the whole policy and treatment and expression still remains far removed from the realities of the Chinese revolution and the tasks it throws upon us. Instead, we find " sympathy " in plenty with the national movement of the Chinese ; but alongside that sympathy, continual distrust of and warnings against the Chinese " mob," the " crowds "—thus showing a completely liberal upper-class interpretation of the " national " movement and complete failure to understand the character of the mass-struggle against imperialism. We find the continual conception of neutrality, of mediation between British imperialism and Chinese nationalism, of alternate " warnings " to either side (MacDonald), of holding the scales between " Chinese dare-devils and British die-hards " (*Lansbury's Labour Weekly*) or " mischief-makers on either side " (Independent Labour Party

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manifesto), as one might hold the scales between the mineowners and the miners, the exploiters and the exploited, instead of the only possible relation of alliance in a common fight.

BEHIND all this "sympathy" and "warnings" of the reformist leadership to the Chinese fighters there is no suggestion of action to help, no suggestion of preventing the sending out of the troops and guns and ships to kill the Chinese national struggle. On the contrary, the moment the crisis reaches its most intense point, the whole agitation, the whole world-important issue of imperialism and revolution at the very fighting point, is sunk and forgotten and submerged in an emotional wave of senseless self-indulgent passive pacifism—"we won't serve," "thousands of us will never go to the front or make munitions," &c. As if that were the issue! As if that will stop the guns and the troops slaughtering Chinese freedom. The British forces are there. The British war on China is in fact already there, even though the guns should never be fired. This is the issue that has to be faced. British imperialism is exerting the whole weight of its power to coerce the Chinese into submission. This can only be met by the counter-weight of the power of the British working class. Personal abstention will no more help the Chinese than it would have helped the miners in 1926 to suggest that the other workers should vow not to become special constables. If this is the only policy, it would be better to confess honestly and without further hypocrisy that there is no policy, that there is complete indifference to the fate of China and the world struggle, that there is nothing but the lowest self-centred religious individualism in place of international socialism and working-class policy. Personal abstention, like all religion, passivism, quietism, is the tool of reaction, the counterpart of aggressive imperialism, the enemy of the workers. The struggle in China, which is in every sense our own struggle, will be decided by the action of the masses in China and in Britain; for this purpose only is agitation useful.

ALL this confusion and distortion of the plain issue of the fight against imperialism in China, under a maze of pacifism, m diation, neutrality, League-of-Nations-inter-

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vention, peace-by-negotiation, war-resistance and the rest of it, is as direct a repudiation of a great international working-class duty and playing into the hands of imperialist aggression as the open, unconcealed Foreign Office service of MacDonald and Thomas. It means a complete failure to understand the real character of the struggle in China, which if it were once clearly understood, pacifism and neutrality would be as out of the question as in an industrial dispute. It means a failure to understand the character of the struggle against imperialism, which is vital to the future of the British working class. For the Chinese national struggle is not a nineteenth-century type of national-democratic struggle to which the working class may extend a benevolent sympathy. The Chinese national struggle is in its own sphere as direct a part of the international working-class struggle as the Russian revolution.

WHAT is imperialism in China? Does it consist simply in a system of extra-territoriality, concessions, unequal treaties and other privileges of foreigners, incompatible with national sovereignty and independence? The essence of the matter does not at all lie there. This is no more than the apparatus, the outward forms and signs and protective framework of imperialism. Imperialism in China consists in the monopoly of the financial and industrial life of the country, the ownership and control of the principal revenues, railways, mines, industries, banks, shipping and trading depots, the subjection of the country to a weight of foreign loans and concessions, and on the basis of all this the increasing exploitation of the whole mass of workers and peasants in the country. The struggle of the masses against this oppression must necessarily first take the form of a struggle for national independence against the special privileges and garrisons of the imperialists which are the immediate instruments of subjection. But this is only the first stage. Emancipation from imperialism can only be achieved through the overthrow of the economic monopoly, through the conquest of the banks, mines, railways and industries by the masses, and their wresting from imperialist hands. Thus the Chinese struggle against imperialism is necessarily a revolutionary struggle, is necessarily a struggle of the masses in the direction of socialism. The growing realisation of this was the

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final outcome of the life's experience, thought and struggle of Sun Yat Sen, bringing him through all the stages of honourable national revolutionary struggle to his final appreciation of the teachings of Leninism. As Lenin declared : "While formerly prior to the epoch of world revolution movements for national liberation were a part of the general democratic movements, now, however, after the victory of the Soviet revolution in Russia and the opening of the period of world revolution, *the movement for national liberation is part of the world proletarian revolution.*"

FOR this reason our approach to the Chinese revolution is not the approach of pacifism and mediation, but the approach of alliance in a common struggle. We say with them : War on British Imperialism ! The same financial monopolist class that preys on them preys on us also. The class that attacked the miners, starved their children and is now turning its offensive on the whole of trade unionism is the same class that sweats the Chinese workers, their women and children, and now turns its guns upon them to maintain its spoils and robbery. So far from concerning ourselves with the "protection of British interests in China," we declare that there are no British interests at stake in China, but only the interests of the exploiters ; and so far from repudiating Chinese "extremists" and "crowds" and "mobs," we say that if only the Chinese could succeed in driving every exploiter out of the country and seizing and confiscating by mass action all the concessions, buildings, banks, mines, railways and factories, we would welcome their victory and strain every nerve to support them in the maintenance of their conquest. No Socialist or class-conscious worker could take any other position. We are at unity with the fight of the Chinese revolution at every stage, and we recognise the correctness of the concentration of the fight against British imperialism as the key position at the present stage. We recognise with shame the part that British money, British munitions and British troops are able to play, owing to our weakness, in hampering the heroic Chinese fight ; and we pledge ourselves to do all in our power to paralyse the action of this intervention and bring it to an end. This is the only position that any Socialist and working-class fighter can take up in relation to the Chinese revolution.

R. P. D.

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THE NEED FOR ONE MINEWORKERS' UNION

By ARTHUR HORNER

THE thirty weeks' stoppage in the mining industry terminated, in practically all districts, on or about December 1, 1926. The Agreements then entered into provide for longer hours, lower wages and worsened local working and payment customs, and are intended to be binding for varying periods. Certain of these Agreements, whilst they are alleged to stabilise wage and working conditions for the period of their duration, merely set up machinery for further sacrifices, if and when the coalowners can persuade an independent chairman that the economic conditions within the industry show a case for still further reductions and/or worsened working conditions.

Let us take as an example of this the South Wales Agreement, Clause II:—

> The wages payable during the period subsequent to the 31st day of May, 1927, shall be the 1915 Standard Base rates applicable to the different classes of workmen employed, plus a percentage upon such rates to be determined in accordance with Clauses 12, 13, 14 and 15 hereof, subject to a minimum of 28 per cent. added to such Standard Base rates. *Provided that either Party to this Agreement shall have the right to apply for a review of the said minimum of 28 per cent. upon the 31st day of December, 1927, and the 31st day of December, 1928, upon giving to the other party one calendar month's notice in writing of their proposals for review.* The said parties shall meet to discuss and settle such proposals for review within seven days of the receipt of such notice, and failing agreement at such meeting, the Independent Chairman shall be summoned to an adjourned meeting of the parties to be held within ten days thereafter, and he shall preside thereat, when the proposals for review shall again be discussed, and in the event of the parties failing to agree, the Chairman either at such meeting or within five days thereafter shall give his casting vote thereon, and the parties shall be bound thereby. The decision upon such review to be operative as from the 1st day of January following the giving of such notice of review.

It will be seen from the above that there is no final level below which wages cannot fall under the Agreements. On May 21, 1927, there is to be a reduction to 28 per cent. from 42.22 per cent.

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On December 31, 1927, and December 31, 1928, further and unlimited reductions can be enforced under the machinery of the Agreement, which will, of course, be applicable only to a minority of districts at a particular time.

Clauses 18 and 19 of the same Agreement determine that an exactly similar process is to be followed in relation to the subsistence wage, which is at present in South Wales fixed at 8s. o¾d. per shift.

It can of course be argued that equal facilities are given the men to put forward a case for a revision upwards, and that the independent chairman will, if the economic condition allows, at a particular time award such an improvement as is economically possible. It is, however, even assuming such an improvement in trade as to render such an improvement possible, very problematical whether such a person would give such an award. Even if he could be persuaded to do so, it would be of no value, because the ascertainments would automatically give the increases without reference to the board or independent chairman, whilst a falling economic condition would not find an outlet below the minimum, were such minimum fixed for the whole period of the Agreement. There can only be one explanation for the inclusion and enforcement of such an arrangement, and that is to be found in the coal-owners' firm belief and intention that wages must be brought down to a level even lower than anyone as yet has dared to think of.

Therefore, we have to face a situation in which hours are to be increased and wages lowered to an indefinite extent, and local customs given up; all of which are enforceable under Agreements of varying durations, entered into by the separate district associations affiliated to the M.F.G.B. As a part of these Agreements, we have the further complication that, although they may not themselves terminate, still worsened conditions are operable under the terms, notwithstanding that the Agreements may be binding upon the workmen, in the sense that no resistance will be possible, unless it is offered within a district, in opposition to the terms of such Agreements, or undertaken by a district fighting alone at the date of the termination of their particular Agreement; as, for instance, in Durham, &c., where the Agreement is only for a twelve months' period.

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The prospects are therefore such as to demand from every active fighter inside the Miners' Federation the most thoughtful examination of all proposals calculated to defend the miner against further attacks. These attacks, it is true, will depend very largely upon the economics of the mining industry in this country, and the areas over which such attacks will be launched, and the severity with which they will be conducted will have relation to this all-determining factor.

The Economic Prospects of Mining in Britain

The general idea now prevailing amongst those who permit wishes to father thought is that, the mining crisis having passed, we may now expect a period of relative prosperity as a consequence of trade recovery. It is expected to be a period which will allow of stabilisation of living standards, and which will make interference with wage rates unnecessary, and in which such degree of struggle as may actually obtain will be the outcome of the acts of diehards, on either side, who voluntarily seek to create causes for trouble where none exist, and to exaggerate them where they do, with the object of serving ulterior persons or movements.

It is therefore essential to understand whether there has been any fundamental and determining change in the condition of the mining industry, and, if any, to what extent it has removed the causes of further friction and class conflict. The Coal Commission, when examining the situation of the mining industry, eliminated all such superficial reasoning as attributed its deplorable condition to personal acts, divorced from economic causes, either on the part of the men or of the owners, and made it perfectly clear, whether they intended to do so or not, that all such acts were reflexes of underlying economic urgings forced upon both sections by the exigencies of maintaining existence under certain conditions inside the prevailing economy.

I am not concerned for the time being with the remedies suggested by the Commission, but only with its diagnosis. Pages 13 and 14 are as follows :—

> *Export Trade.*—(1) The depression in the British coal export trade is, in the main, part of a general depression, affecting almost all European coal-producing countries: an excess of supply over

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demand, caused partly by the impoverishment of customers, partly by the development of new coalfields and partly by the increased use of substitutes.

(2) To a lesser extent it is due to competition of foreign countries with us in the coal export trade, especially that of Germany.

(3) The extent to which the German export trade has been assisted by the Reparations provisions of the Treaty of Versailles is obscure, and the opinions of our witnesses differ. We can only express our conclusion that the British Coal Trade does not regard them as a serious danger.

(4) The substantial fall in British export prices during the latter part of 1925 has been followed by an appreciable recovery of the position in some, though not all, of the competitive markets; and the fall in price has been checked by a restoration of the balance between supply and demand.

Bunker Trade.—(5) In so far as the decrease in coal used in foreign bunkers is the natural consequence of the decrease in the export trade, it is obvious the quantity will increase if the export trade increases. But in so far as it is due to the use of oil instead of coal, the reduction is likely to be progressive, especially if any change in the present relative positions of coal and oil as regards price takes place to the disadvantage of coal.

Home Trade.—(6) No substantial recovery in the home trade can be looked for except from a recovery of the heavy industries.

The situation, as described by the report, is not, as is often supposed, a merely temporary condition, nor does it prevail only in coal production, but is a completely normal and general condition in every phase of capitalist production at a certain stage of its development. The significance of the recent coal settlements lies in the complete immunity which the coalowners have obtained from the financial effects of maladministration within the industry, and pressure from without for cheap coal to save costs in other industries, in which the coalowners are probably interested.

The present situation, notwithstanding the long stoppage, shows that markets are well supplied, and if this is so when scores of pits have not yet come back into production, owing to the damage done during that period, what is likely to be the case in future ? The eight-hour day will give a tremendously increased quantity of coal with less men, and the disease of over-production will be aggravated to that extent. The assumption that such an extended working day would give the British coal industry a bigger market is not founded on fact or experience, for by similar and

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other rationalising processes an equalisation is always sought, and invariably secured, by competitors abroad.

Customers are still impoverished, principally by the reparation and debt demands of British and American finance capitalism. New coalfields are still being developed by slave labour in India, China, &c., under the shadow of British guns, and war appears imminent in consequence of capitalism's anxiety for the safety of mining and other investments there.

Oil from Mesopotamia, Persia, &c., is still, with other alternative fuels, being utilised, and for this purpose armies are in the fields as a guarantee for its continued production. The heavy industries lie shaken by forces of a like kind to those which have destroyed the prosperity of the mining industry, and the consumption of coal purchased is rapidly diminishing in consequence of the reduced purchasing power of the workers suffering under the burden of low wages and unemployment.

There is, therefore, no prospect of the coalowners resting content with their recent thefts; they will be driven forward to endeavour to secure more and more out of the already miserably low standard of living the miners have. The people who cry out for industrial peace, and advocate working-class disarmament in the hope that capitalist pressure will relax in answer to their futile cries, must show a basis in experience and economic prospect for their fond hopes; for to abandon preparations for the exercise of might through organisation of the workers is to succumb beforehand to the coming attacks. Capitalism must and will make preparations for the launching of further offensives, in order to stave off the effects of its own unescapable and disastrous economy.

The Miners must Equip and Organise for Resistance

There is no leader inside the Miners' Federation who is prepared openly to advocate stabilisation of hours and wages at the present level. What then are we to say if the time comes when still more is demanded from us? The degree of resistance will be limited only by the capacity to resist. Fight we shall, all must agree: the only question we really have to deal with is that which has to do with preparations for effective resistance. Can we calmly contemplate allowing the existing Agreements to wend

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their way to their several terminations, and permit under new Agreements periods of duration to be determined which will overlap others expiring later? If not, by what means are we to lend aid to a district such as Durham at the end of one year? Are districts such as South Wales to be left to fight alone against the imposition of wage cuts under the terms of their Agreement? If the very idea is scouted, as it certainly should be, is the maximum strength of the Federation to be put on an issue local to a particular district at a particular time, and a process of exhaustion undergone in this hopeless and helpless fashion? If not, are we going to permit certain districts to fight these issues alone whilst the other districts of the same Federation produce Black Coal for our mutual destruction?

There is only one way and that is to base our preparations on the assumption that these agreements were never made, and, what is no assumption, that they are imposed terms for which we recognise no responsibility. The only legal way to terminate these pernicious documents is to liquidate one of the parties to the Agreements. This does not mean that the existing district organisations must immediately eliminate themselves; rather they must strengthen themselves for the purpose of securing a complete absorption in a new and more effective body, which shall have no ties with the past and be better fitted to undertake the tasks of the future.

This is no new idea, for when the coalowners decided to finish making national agreements, prior to May last, the first step they took was to dissolve the National Mineowners' Association as a negotiating body acting on behalf of the British mineowners as a whole. Thus, when our representatives sought to approach them nationally, they were informed that this body no longer existed. Why should not we obtain the result we seek, "One Agreement for all British mineworkers," by means of the reverse process, namely, the dissolution of the District Associations which are at present affiliated to the M.F.G.B. by and through their absorption in one National Mineworkers' Union? This is not, of course, as simple as it may appear on the surface, for in addition to the negative task of destroying the old Agreements, there is

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also the much bigger one of building up a machine to take the place of the old.

I am not proposing to outline a possible constitution for the one mineworkers' union in this article, but I do wish to state that our attitude is not simply destructive of the old, with a slogan as a substitute, because we have prepared in the Miners' Minority Movement a very elaborate suggested set of rules and a constitution which is now in the press, and will probably be on sale when this issue of the LABOUR MONTHLY is read. To all sections of the Miners' Federation we would appeal for fair consideration of the proposals outlined, and we wish to state that such amendments as can be shown to be of benefit to the work of building up an effective machine of struggle for our people should be freely put forward. The contents of the rules and constitution have been framed by miners by a process of selection and elimination from the rules of other organisations outside the Miners' Federation, but mainly it has been got together by co-ordination of, and elimination from, the existing rules of the District Associations of the Miners' Federation, which have thus been given a national application.

There is, of course, bound to be considerable sacrifice in district autonomy; centralisation is by its very nature the negation of such unit control. This obnoxious necessity has been forced upon us by the logic of events, which have made it clear to all that district fighting is inseparable from defeat when great issues affecting the welfare of the mineworkers are at stake. We regret that we are forced to anticipate considerable opposition to our proposals from persons who would rather retain an old but futile machine than risk association with an improvement, because of its newness. Such an attitude can only be the outcome of a desire to keep the organisation small enough to permit those of small stature to maintain dominance, whereas every honest fighter will be concerned to exercise to become big enough to work in the bigger and more effective machine.

Our destinies in the different districts are too interwoven and interdependent to permit such personal considerations or silly prejudices to stay the mineworkers from getting together for mutual assistance. Sabotage of unity can only impede and

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make the task more difficult of realisation; the intensification of the coalowners' attacks upon us will ultimately render a single mineworkers' union imperative. The next task, therefore, is to secure discussion of a set of proposals calculated to achieve organisational unity, as a preliminary to the holding of a National Conference to decide upon recommending the liquidation of the old and the introduction of the new. There should, however, be great care exercised to avoid finding in this proposal an excuse to avoid winning back to the district federations all the old members. Those who seek to justify their non-unionism by declaring dissatisfaction with the present form of organisation can only be treated seriously if and when they participate in the task of forcing improvement by coming inside, and so obtaining the right to join in the task. Meantime scab unions, craft unions, company unions, and community unions, such as the "General and Municipal Workers," must not be allowed to grow up to do tremendous harm immediately and to make final unity much more difficult than it otherwise would be. All steps taken from now onward must be in the direction of the elimination of poaching and redundant unions, and aiming at the setting up of one mineworkers' union.

The recent defeat has demonstrated, too, that even the maximum of unity in the Miners' Federation will not necessarily ensure victory, and that allies are an essential part of any programme of action seeking success in the struggle with centralised capitalism, directed by the cabinet of the British Parliament.

The Conference of Executives, regrettable as was its conclusion and its condonation of treachery, must not be allowed to inculcate separatist tendencies in the ranks of the miners. Disgust there must be amongst us, and when we look at the suffering women and children, hatred overwhelms us, but let us not confuse the issues, and forget in doing so to keep clear and apart from the atmosphere of betrayal the memory of those wonderful nine days of unsurpassed loyalty of our comrades of the railways, mills and factories. Having seen that, all things should now be possible. The masses are capable of effective struggle over the whole front. That is more than enough to kill all ideas of separation coming as a consequence of leaders' actions. Leaders can and must be changed, where and when they fail.

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The Miners' Federation must permeate the other unions with the idea of all power to the General Council of the Trades Union Congress, and advocate the introduction of a leadership that will conduct struggle against all the forces of capitalism, including the Class State. Not less unity in consequence of our recent setback, but more. We are suffering, not because of too much unity, but because we are not organisationally and otherwise united enough. The Conference of Executives has not killed the General Strike; on the contrary, it has demonstrated more than ever who and what are the allies of capitalism, who and which did prevent and will if they can prevent in future such struggles reaching a successful conclusion.

The miners' fight is not over; it is becoming more bitter than ever. The miners must build up a better machine of struggle, and prepare for its effective utilisation. The big struggles of the near future will be class struggles affecting the whole mass of Britain's workers. Therefore we must work harder than ever to bring the workers of all industries at home and abroad together around a programme of common struggle for agreed demands and mutual protection. To do this we must have an all-inclusive working-class organisation capable of effective fighting. The Trades Union Congress must become the framework of this machine, and men possessing a greater degree of class loyalty must be charged with its direction.

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SIR AUSTEN VON HINDENBURG

By W. N. EWER

THERE are two estimates of the Chinese situation —both rather stupid, both exceedingly short-sighted— which are very prevalent just now in the British Labour movement.

The one, which you are apt to find in Communist and Left Wing quarters, is that British Imperialism has been well and truly beaten by the victorious Chinese revolution, that it is in full retreat, and that it is only a question of time before it disappears "bag and baggage" from China. The other estimate is to be met with in the Right Wing. It is that at any rate a large and important section of the British ruling class, a section typified by the Foreign Office, has seen the error of its past ways, has passed through all the religious processes of contrition and conversion, and is now generously and sincerely attempting to make reparation to the Chinese people and to surrender all ill-gotten gains, of privilege and the like, as rapidly as peaceful and orderly arrangements can be made.

Now these views are both as silly as would have been comparable military views expressed in the spring of 1917 when the Germans fell back from the bloody fastnesses of the Somme to the Hindenburg line. Anyone who had deduced from that retreat either that the German armies were breaking for the Rhine in headlong rout, or that, on the other hand, the Kaiser and his camarilla had been suddenly converted to Tolstoyan pacifism would have been manifestly and demonstrably an idiot.

Yet the parallel is exceedingly close. Certainly, Great Britain in China is in full retreat, just as were von Hindenburg's troops in 1917. But equally certain her movement is, precisely as was von Hindenburg's, a tactical one, indicating, indeed, a slight strain, but emphatically not indicating either surrender or a kind of Pauline conversion.

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Great Britain in China is undefeated, for defeat only comes when the will and the power to resist are broken; and neither the will nor the power is as yet even seriously bent.

It is a fatal folly not to recognise that, a fatal folly to believe that to have won a round is to have won the fight—quite as fatal as that other foolishness which believes that a lost round means a lost fight.

This struggle that has opened in China is a long story, of which only the opening chapters have as yet been written. The easy triumph of Hankow is the prelude not to victory but to the struggle itself.

The optimism which believes that there has been in the Government of this country a "change of heart" which may bring a speedy peace is as unthinking as the optimism which believes that there is a realisation of defeat which will bring a speedy victory for Chinese nationality. Each optimism is born of the same confusion of desire with fact, of the same flinching from reality. Belief springs from the will to believe. But such beliefs are always the most dangerous of illusions.

Let us take first the illusion of the change of heart—the belief that Sir Austen, albeit somewhat hampered by malevolent or clumsy gentlemen in other offices in Whitehall, is now really doing his best to reach a settlement with the Chinese and is prepared, for the sake of such a settlement, to make "liberal and generous" concessions. The adjectives, one may note, are Sir Austen's own valuation of his proposals, solemnly set down in his own note to Mr. Chen, wherein he further paid tribute to the "fair and conciliatory spirit with which they are animated" —surely an example of bad taste and self-righteousness without parallel in diplomatic history.

Now the first and essential point to be noted about Sir Austen's "liberal and generous" concessions is, to employ a necessary Hibernicism, that he has not made any.

The acid test of his intentions may be found precisely here, for if he had indeed seen the light on the road to Damascus; if he had indeed had a vision of the China asking "Austen, Austen, why persecutest thou me?"; if he had sincerely repented of the days when he denounced the Cantonese leaders as "lawless

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extremists ": then he would have marked his conversion by a free-will offering which would have been in fact—though he would have blushed to call it in words—" liberal and generous."

But there have been no free-will offerings, only acquiescent surrenders of untenable or already lost positions. And, moreover, this is the second important point: none of them is a key position or of any vital importance. Hankow, the very word has been much used in the Government's private discussions, is an outpost. To hold it would call for an effort out of all proportion to its value—an effort which might even prejudice the defence of the main position ; so, too, with the surtaxes. To have refused to allow their collection would have been to restart in intenser form the trade boycott, and to stake on the issue of that struggle not only the surtaxes but the whole of the customs, both their limitation and their foreign control. Clearly the wise move was to abandon the 22 per cent. without fighting.

Abandonment of " outposts " which—for geographical reasons, as Hankow, or for economic reasons, as the surtaxes—would become untenable or only perilously tenable, and which are not of vital importance; concentrate the forces and dig in, both diplomatically and militarily, on a position which will safeguard all the most important and valuable privileges. So long as our capitalists in China are able to exploit cheap labour without annoyance by trade unions or Labour laws; so long as there are important areas in which they have their own courts and their own police, in which they may kick coolies to their heart's content without fear of reprisal; so long as they can live the lives of a privileged sahib-caste, protected by the whole armed force of the British Empire against the retribution that comes to sahib-castes. As long as this is secured to them—and the consequential big dividends to their shareholders—why should one worry unduly about "outposts"?

They *will* worry, of course. There was never a retreat in history that was not loudly denounced as a policy of scuttle by idiots who would not see the game. I have no doubt that the younger Norman knights at Senlac were furious in denunciation of their duke's weakness when he ordered them to turn their backs on Harold's huscarls.

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But the young gentlemen in the Shanghai Club bar, who are tumultuously demanding that a British army shall march to the recapture of the Hankow concession and return with Mr. Chen's head on a charger, don't matter twopence.

The Government's policy—and Sir Austen is perfectly accurate when he says that it is the policy of the Government as a whole—is the policy of the Hindenburg line. And to Sir Austen and to the Foreign Office has been confided the delicate and ticklish job of conducting the retreat with a minimum of loss, a maximum of prestige, and as much consumption of time as is necessary to get the line itself properly prepared.

That operation they have really performed admirably well. They have been rather hampered now and then by the embarrassing activities of gentlemen in other departments, who failed to realise the delicacy of the operation that was going on. They have been annoyed by the, to them, excessive publicity given to the Shanghai defence force—annoyed for precisely the same reason that von Hindenburg would have been annoyed by special editions with splash stories telling the world of the construction of his famous line. How much pleasanter if all the preparations could have been made without anybody, either here or in China, realising what was going on.

However, it looks, at the moment when I am writing, as if, in spite of one or two awkward moments, the retreat is going to get itself successfully accomplished. What then ?

First, and very certainly, not peace. One does not sign peace on the Hindenburg line.

The issues at stake between the British "garrison" in China and the Kuomintang are indeed quite incapable of settlement under existing circumstances. To dream of "peace" on the basis of the Chamberlain memorandum or the O'Malley note is to indulge in the most foolish, if the most comfortable, of self-deceptions. With a Government of the old Peking type, with one of the modern war lords, it would be very easy. A concession to "face" here, a little—direct or indirect—bribery there, a balancing of "concession" and "compensation" (at the expense of the masses), a sort of revised agreement of partnership in exploitation, and the thing would be done. Canton

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of course could have had a settlement long ago on these terms—a settlement which would have given the Kuomintang Government recognition and a big loan. The only condition was that it should abandon its trade union activities and behave like an ordinary Chinese Government. Canton could have a settlement now with Chang Tso-lin which would give its leaders illimitable opportunities for "squeeze," but the condition again is that they must get rid of Borodin and drop their "Bolshevist ideas." But to the enormous surprise of the tempters Canton has turned a deaf ear and has refused to be bribed into deserting the workers. Wherefore much grave shaking of heads and pained regret that "extremist influences" should be so strong (common honesty naturally appearing to some minds as the most outrageous of extremisms) and that peace should thereby be endangered.

Not "extremist influences" but hard fact forbids peace between a caste determined to cling to its privileges and to its power of exploitation, and an aroused working class determined to abolish that privilege and to free itself from that exploitation. Precisely because the struggle in China is not a mere squabble over loot-division, but is a phase of the class-struggle itself, it must inevitably go forward to a definite decision. Only when either the exploiting class has been coerced (by physical, economic, or moral intimidation) into abandonment of its power, or the working-class has been coerced (equally by intimidation) into a new period of submission can the struggle cease, for even a while.

In short, Shanghai and Canton are irreconcilable opposites. The struggle between them will go on until one or the other is broken.

Therefore (and whether Sir Austen realises it or not, the more powerful men behind him certainly do) the new Hindenburg line is—and indeed must be—a base from which new offensive action against the Kuomintang can be planned. Sir Austen may talk much of the strictness of his neutrality. Like Sir William Joynson-Hicks he must keep up appearances. But Shanghai itself has no illusions, nor has Hong Kong, nor have the big British interests. They realise perfectly clearly that the job now is to smash the Kuomintang, and that all the British Government's movements (withdrawal from the Upper Yangtse, military con-

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centration at Hong Kong and Shanghai, etc.) have been singularly well adapted to helping on that good work.

It is not in the least a coincidence that just as the Defence Force began to arrive Sun Chuan-Fang took the offensive in Chekiang, and the two Changs began their long-delayed march south on Hankow. For to that twin movement the British—for all that, they might never fire a shot—were worth many army corps to the War Lords. Within twenty-four hours of the arrival of the first Brigade at Shanghai it was reported that Sun had moved every soldier out of the town to the Hangchow front. The result of that Hangchow battle I do not know as I write : but that the British troops have in fact acted as a valuable reinforcement to Sun is very plain.

Nor is it possible to mistake the purpose of the simultaneous military demonstration at Kowloon. A big concentration of troops, a few threatening marches and counter-marches, a few sharp notes about anything or nothing to Canton, and the result will be that the Cantonese Government would be bound to keep a substantial "Canton Defence Force" in the south to guard against a possible menace to their capital. That again is worth many, many troops to the Northern War Lords.

So, while preserving its formal neutrality, the British Government is contriving to give very effective though indirect aid and comfort to the enemies of the Kuomintang. Is any more direct aid being given ?

Now that is a question to which it is obviously not possible to give a detailed and demonstrative answer. But there is no room for doubt that Chang Tso-lin has, within the last few weeks, received from some foreign source very substantial financial aid.

Consider the sequence of events. Last month he was, admittedly, pressing Sir Miles Lampson for a loan. His military adviser, "General" Sutton, had publicly stated that without a loan it would be impossible to take the field against the Cantonese. The finances of Mukden are in hopeless confusion : Chang's money is rapidly going the way of paper money when the presses run unstintingly : even the famous Mukden Arsenal was forced to shut down. Chang was threatening to take his armies back to Manchuria.

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That was the situation towards the end of January. With the change of the month the situation changed completely. The *Daily Telegraph* correspondent was able to wire that Chang had been " dissuaded " from going home. There is only one argument which could have dissuaded him. Ten days later he issued his orders to his troops for the campaign which Sutton had admitted to be impossible without a foreign subsidy.

It is as clear as daylight that a subsidy, or a loan, came just in time, and that the donors of that subsidy are the real authors of the new attack on the Cantonese.

Who were they? Not the Japanese, for they have been for a long time urging on Chang that his right policy is to consolidate his power in Manchuria, and not to go running risks in China proper. The British Government? I am by no means so sure. Officially, the Foreign Office is probably as guiltless as it declares; it has small resources any way. But the Colonial Office has curious uncontrolled and easily mobilisable funds, as we saw when the loan of £3,000,000 was granted to Hong Kong last year (one would, by the way, like detailed information as to the expenditure of the £3,000,000). The India Office—or the Government of India —has big resources. I would not care to go bail that the British Government, as a whole, has had no hand in the financing of Chang.

And then there is private enterprise. There are among the Anglo-Chinese firms some of the richest corporations in the world, headed by men whose hatred of the new China and the new Russia is so passionate that they would (quite apart from the business aspect of the deal) gladly pay big money to aid in its overthrow—particularly if the money were in the form of a loan giving them a further stranglehold on China's finances. Colonel Malone was told last May by a business man of the highest standing, that " at a meeting when several members of the British Chamber of Commerce at Hankow were present the chairman had said that the time had come when they should come out into the open as the supporters of Wu Pei-fu, instead of supplying arms secretly. And that an Anglo-American cigarette company had arranged a loan of £400,000 for Wu." If for Wu in 1926, why not for Chang in 1927? And indeed for Wu as well; for

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his threatened opposition to Chang's march southward dissolved with an almost ludicrous suddenness ; the nature of the solvent is not hard to divine.

One may therefore regard it as morally certain that Chang is being financed from British sources of some kind ; that he is—in the picturesque Chinese phrase—a British hunting dog ; and that his offensive is in the last analysis a British offensive.

That in fact appears to be the strategy of the present movement. There is a tripartite division of function, based on the conception of a temporary concentration on a Hindenburg line.

Sir Austen's job has been to conduct an orderly and not too hasty retreat from the untenable outposts of the line. General Duncan has to hold the line itself (and in so doing to contain a goodly portion of the enemy forces). Chang Tso-lin and the minor mercenaries (Wu Pei-fu, Chang Tsung-chang and the rest of them) are to conduct the counter-offensive. And if that counter-offensive fails—as it is likely to fail?

Then will come the real danger of war. For the Shanghai interests will clamour that we must "do the job ourselves" ; there will be an army and a considerable fleet on the spot ; the spring would have come ; there will be water in the Yang-tse.

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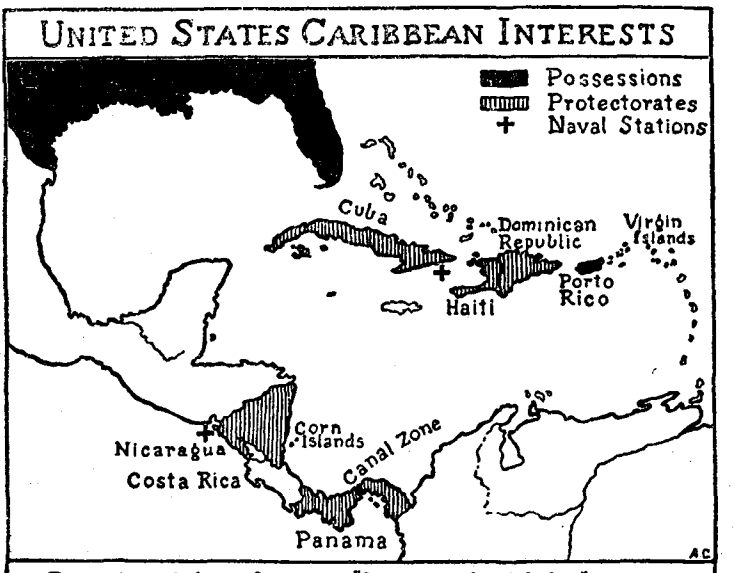
AMERICAN IMPERIALISM IN THE CARIBBEAN

By SCOTT NEARING

BETWEEN the Mexican War of 1846-48 and the Spanish War of 1898, the ruling class in the United States practised no aggression against neighbouring territory. Instead, it spent its surplus wealth in building capitalist organisation within its own boundaries—opening mines and factories, constructing railroads, &c. It was during this period that the United States gained its reputation for "splendid isolation" and for "peaceful, law-abiding progress." The other great capitalist countries were grabbing territory in Africa and partitioning Asia. The United States was "non-aggressive."

With the Spanish-American War (1898), however, a new era set in. At this juncture the United States became a capital exporting nation. During the following years, and particularly after 1915, the United States spread its influence rapidly into neighbouring territories. On the north the United States pene-



Reproduced from Lingley's "Since the Civil War", p. 524.

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trated Canada. On the south it rapidly extended its control over the countries bordering the Caribbean.

The whole Caribbean area is strategically important to the United States, and since the construction of the Panama Canal in the years following 1903 (the date of the seizure of Panama) control of the Caribbean has meant the control and protection of the canal. Haiti and Santo Domingo, for example, are an essential link in this control. Furthermore, they are very rich in tropical products, of which the United States is a large importer, and they have correspondingly attracted United States capital.

The U.S.A. and Haiti

In 1910 the National City Bank of New York (the largest commercial bank in the United States) became interested in the National Bank of Haiti. Shortly after the outbreak of the war of 1914 negotiations were begun to have the National City Bank acquire control of the Haitian Bank. This control was finally established in 1919.

Throughout these transactions, the United States State Department played a prominent rôle. On six occasions during 1914 and 1915, when Bryan was Secretary of State (Wilson was President) the State Department made overtures to Haiti to obtain control of the customs, in order that the bankers' investments might be securely guaranteed. The movement was begun in October, 1914, by strengthening the naval forces detailed to Haitian waters.

In December, 1914, after the proposal to turn over the control of the Haitian customs to the United States had twice been rejected a force of United States marines was landed at Port au Prince. The marines proceeded to the Haitian National Bank; forcibly seized $500,000 in cash and carried it aboard the gunboat "Machias." This money was the property of the Haitian Government and had been deposited for the redemption of paper currency. The money was taken to New York and deposited in the vaults of the National City Bank. No explanation was ever given for the act.

Now the idea seems to have been that the loss of the money would break down the financial system of Haiti and compel that

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country to turn over the control of its customs to the United States.

The position of the United States State Department was clearly indicated by the telegram sent by Secretary Bryan on January 28, 1915, via the Navy Department, to the American commander in Haitian waters:—

> You will issue to that Government a warning that any attempt that might be made to remove the funds of the bank will compel you to take into consideration means to prevent such violation of foreign stockholders' rights.

The "foreign stockholders" were the National City Bank.

While the United States Government was negotiating for the control of Haitian customs, in July, 1915, a revolution broke out in Port au Prince, and the President of Haiti was killed. No American was injured, either in person or property. Nevertheless, marines were at once landed.

The Haitian legislature met to elect a president in place of the man who had lost his life in the revolution of July 27. Admiral Caperton, in charge of the United States forces, compelled the legislature to delay the election until the United States naval officers could look over the situation and decide on an acceptable candidate. The chief object of the State Department at this juncture was the acceptance, by Haiti, of a treaty prepared by the State Department, under which the control of Haitian customs passed to the United States.

If the State Department treaty, giving the United States control over the customs, was to be passed, it was necessary to find the right man for the presidency of Haiti. The man finally decided upon was Dartiguenave. The Navy Department then wired that:

> Admiral Caperton might allow election of president to take place whenever Haitians wish. The United States prefers election of Dartiguenave . . . United States will insist that the Haitian Government will grant no territoral concessions to any foreign governments. The Government of the United States will take up the question of the cession of Mole St. Nicholas later.

Mole St. Nicholas was needed for a United States Naval Station.

On the same day the Secretary of State wired his instructions to the United States minister in Port au Prince:—

> It should be made perfectly clear to candidates, as soon as possible, and in advance of their election, that the United States expects to be

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> entrusted with the practical control of the customs and such financial control over the affairs of the Republic of Haiti as the United States may deem necessary for efficient administration.

"Efficient administration" meant, of course, an administration that would pay the interest on the investments controlled by the National City Bank—the foreign stockholders.

On the day of the election United States marines guarded the doors of the auditorium where the delegates were in session, and a United States officer circulated among the delegates. The United States candidate was elected.

Two days after the election, the United States Chargé at Port au Prince submitted the draft of a new treaty, more drastic than the previous one, under which the United States should not only control Haitian customs and finances, but should officer the constabulary of Haiti. The Haitian Congress refused to accept the terms. The United States naval forces, under orders from the State Department, then seized the ten principal custom houses of Haiti, collected the customs, organised a constabulary, and set up a department of public works.

Between August 21 and September 2 the United States navy took possession of the capital, and occupied the custom houses in the ten chief ports of Haiti. Since the customs were the principal source of revenue, this left the Haitian Government without income. Still the treaty was not ratified. On September 3, martial law was declared. The Haitian Senate held out obdurately.

On November 10, the Secretary of the Navy cabled to Admiral Caperton, directing him to have a cabinet meeting called and to state to the cabinet that "if the treaty fails of ratification that my Government has the intention to retain control in Haiti until the desired end is accomplished." As a result of this threat, the Haitian Senate ratified the treaty on November 11, 1915.

Under the treaty the President of the United States appointed the receiver of the customs, who was responsible for the fiscal policy of Haiti. The President of the United States also appointed the officers of the Haitian constabulary, who were to be Americans. Haiti could not increase her debt, change her customs or alienate any of her territory without the consent of the United States.

Under the guns of the United States marines the Haitians

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adopted a new constitution on June 18, 1918, by which all acts of the Government of the United States "during its military occupation in Haiti are ratified and confirmed." The new constitution also abolished one of the oldest safeguards of the Republic by permitting foreigners to hold land.

During the military occupation, according to the report of the United States Marine Corps, 3,250 Haitians were killed either by the marines or the gendarmerie.

The Haitian Treaty of 1915 was modified in 1917, and in 1919 a new loan was floated, which went, of course, to the National City Bank. The bids for this Haitian loan were sent, not to Haiti, but to the State Department at Washington.

It is significant that most of these transactions occurred under the presidency of Woodrow Wilson, and at a time when he was vigorously proclaiming the rights of small nations. However, when the next president, Harding, was inaugurated, he appointed a brigadier-general as high commissioner in Haiti. Acting under Navy Department orders, General Russell established a court martial, and issued a proclamation under which speeches and writings "that reflected adversely upon the United States forces in Haiti" or that tended "to stir up agitation against the United States officials" subjected the offender to court martial. In August, 1921, three Haitian journalists were arrested and court-martialled for criticising the American occupation in violation of this order.

The story of the relations between the United States and Santo Domingo is essentially the same as that of the relations with Haiti. The economic interests were different, but the procedure towards military occupation and political subjugation was parallel.

Historically, the United States Government has been establishing a technique of dealing with very weak countries like Haiti. Marines are sent in and "law and order" are established. Another technique, equally well developed, is the cultivation of revolutions in neighbouring countries. There was a revolution in Hawaii (1893) just before the treaty of annexation to the United States was written. There was a revolution in Panama (1903) just before the United States began digging the Panama Canal. There were revolutions in Mexico, financed by United States

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capital, and backed by the United States State Department after the development of Mexican oil. Economically and politically the United States was involved in all of these revolutions.

The U.S.A. and Mexico

Mexico was ripe for revolution in 1910. President Diaz, who had been in power since 1876, was surrounded by a group of men whose business it was to sell Mexican concessions to foreign capitalists. The Diaz Government was financed, in part, on that basis.

The selling of concessions meant the establishment of mines, smelters, factories, railways, and other forms of modern industrial enterprise—meant the rise of a business class to challenge the power of the landed aristocracy that was represented by Diaz. The farmers were hungry. The city workers were unorganised, underpaid, and bitterly exploited.

Mexico was rich, but the Mexicans were poor. The bulk of Mexican resources was owned by foreigners, and the Mexican land was in the hands of a few great land holders.

Oil had been discovered in Mexico in 1900. In quantity it was unbelievably abundant. One well, which began to flow on September 10, 1910, produced 70,000 barrels per day. By 1919 this well alone had produced 100,000,000 barrels of oil.

American oil interests first discovered the richness of the Mexican fields. The British were not slow to come into the field, however, and by 1908 the British interests were getting special concessions from Diaz, who was always careful not to let the capitalists from one nation get a monopoly on Mexican concessions that would endanger the Mexican Government.

At the election in 1910 Diaz was elected for the eighth time. His rival, Madero, a banker and business man, representing the rapidly developing business class in Mexico, declared that the election had been unfairly conducted, and demanded that Diaz either resign or permit a fair election. On the refusal of Diaz to do either, Madero began a revolution.

From the outset Madero had the support of the United States interests and the United States Government. Diaz was openly favouring the British oil interests, and the whole weight of United

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States influence was thrown against him. Madero was officially recognised by the United States Government in 1911, although he was never really in control of Mexico. But by the prohibition of the export of arms and ammunition to Mexico, President Taft cut off the source from which the revolutionists in the northern part of Mexico had been drawing their military supplies.

Despite the support which the United States interests had given Madero he was overthrown in 1913 by Victoriano Huerta, an avowed representative of the British oil interests. Papers on both sides of the Atlantic frankly talked about the struggle for Mexican oil as a struggle between the British and United States capitalist interests. President Wilson and Secretary of State Bryan were convinced that the British were backing Huerta, and that the United States must take the opposite side in the controversy for the purpose of protecting the American interests.

Britain and most of the other great capitalist states had already recognised Huerta. This Wilson refused to do. Instead, by public utterances, he led the anti-Huerta forces in Mexico to believe that they had every reason to expect support from the United States Government. Within three months of his accession to the presidency, Huerta was faced with a general uprising, headed by Carranza, Villa, and other generals, who felt confident that they could secure the support of the United States.

President Wilson recalled the United States ambassador, who had been urging recognition for Huerta, and in his place sent a confidential agent, John Lind. Lind offered Huerta peace, provided he would agree to withdraw from the presidency and to give up fighting. He also promised the Mexican Government a loan if the terms were complied with.

Upon the rejection of these terms, and the election of Huerta as interim president, the United States Government removed the embargo on the shipment of arms into Mexico, and thus enabled the anti-Huerta groups in the north to equip themselves from the United States. The United States Press was meanwhile clamouring for intervention. But the Wilson Administration evidently felt that intervention was unnecessary. The anti-Huerta forces were winning anyway.

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After nearly a year of manipulation, however, Huerta was still in power. It became necessary to take more drastic action. Several minor incidents were magnified and utilised as a basis for armed intervention.

One of these incidents arose out of the temporary arrest of some United States marines who had landed for gasoline at a Tampico wharf that had just sustained an attack. The marines were released with an apology after a short detention.

The other incident involved a quarrel between a United States and a Mexican mail orderly in the Vera Cruz post office. In this case also the Mexican authorities apologised.

At 2.30 a.m., on April 21, 1914, President Wilson was called on the telephone and informed that the German ship " Ypirango " was approaching Vera Cruz with a load of arms and ammunition destined for the Huerta forces. The arrival of these arms would have gone far toward strengthening the Huerta cause. After a consultation, Wilson said : " Take Vera Cruz at once." At eight o'clock, on April 22, the United States marines and sailors landed at Vera Cruz; seized the principal buildings; took possession of the " Ypirango," and advancing under the guns of the fleet, captured the town. Seventeen United States sailors and about 200 Mexicans lost their lives in the struggle. The loss of Vera Cruz cost Huerta $500,000 per month in Vera Cruz customs taxes. Two months later Huerta left Mexico and the Constitutionists under Carranza were installed.

United States officials were responsible for the overthrow of Huerta. They were opposed to him because of his advocacy of British oil interests. United States oil interests took the same stand. They refused to pay taxes to the Huerta regime and supplied the Carranza forces with very large advances of cash and oil.

E. L. Doheny, the chief of the United States oil men in Mexico, made this quite plain in the testimony which he gave before a Senate Committee of Inquiry in 1919.

> It was a well-known fact that the British assisted in the sale of a large amount of Huerta bonds, and they were distinctly favourable to the Huerta Government at that time. Our Government had shown its animosity to Huerta and its desire to support his opponents. So that our action was in line with our own Government and that of

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the British was in line with the supposed sympathies of the British Government.

The Doheny interests, according to the testimony of Mr. Doheny, turned over $100,000 in cash to a Carranza agent. Later, the same interests supplied Carranza with $685,000 worth of oil credit.

The United States and Nicaragua

One more brief illustration of the effectiveness with which revolutions are used by the United States to further its interests in the Caribbean area. United States bankers held many Nicaraguan bonds. The United States navy wanted a canal across Nicaragua. The combination of economic and strategic considerations led to the establishment of a United States protectorate over Nicaragua.

In 1909 a revolution broke out against President Zelaya of Nicaragua. The revolution was financed by Adolfo Diaz, an employee of an American mining corporation, who advanced $600,000 to support the cause. Diaz's salary was $1,000 per year.

Zelaya was driven out of the country and a successor was elected. Nevertheless the United States continued its support of the revolutionists. The Nicaraguan Government officially protested to the United States. But the Washington Government compelled the Nicaraguan Government to allow American ships carrying arms and munitions to the rebels to pass the blockade which the Government had established.

In August, 1910, the Government troops had surrounded the rebels and attempted to destroy them in Bluefields. The United States fleet landed marines and prevented the Government from carrying out the campaign.

During October, 1910, the State Department sent an agent to Nicaragua with instructions to arrange for a loan that would be secured by a lien on the customs. At the same time Brown Brothers (bankers) arranged to make the loan. On October 27, 1910, aboard an American battleship, the leaders of the revolutionists agreed that they would, as soon as they came to power, negotiate a loan under the guidance of the State Department, and would secure the loan by a lien on customs. A month later

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the Assembly elected Estrada president and Diaz vice-president. Within three weeks this Government was recognised by the State Department. Subsequently, the agreement under which Estrada had been elevated to power was discovered and published by his opponents. Its terms united the masses of Nicaraguans against the Estrada Government.

In the spring of 1911 the National Assembly adopted a constitution which was directed against foreign loans. The constitution was opposed by the State Department. After its adoption Estrada dissolved the Assembly. The resulting conflict led to Estrada's resignation.

Diaz succeeded no better than Estrada had done. Bitter opposition developed, and the United States minister wired Washington:—

> "The Assembly will confirm Diaz in the presidency according to any one of the . . . plans which the Department may indicate . . . A war vessel is necessary for the moral effect." On May 25, 1911, he wired that: "The Liberals were organising all over the country to defeat the loan, and because of their large majority over the Diaz faction, he advised that a war vessel be stationed in Nicaraguan waters at least until the loan has been put through."

While this struggle was in progress in Nicaragua, the representative of the Diaz Government in Washington signed a series of agreements under which the New York bankers made a loan to Nicaragua, and under which the State Department appointed a collector of customs for Nicaragua who had the "confidence" of the New York bankers.

The Nicaraguan Assembly, still in revolt against the loans and the customs control, adopted and promulgated a new constitution on January 12, 1912, against the express protests of the United States minister. The Assembly bitterly resented this interference with their sovereignty.

So unpopular had Diaz become that in July, 1912, the whole country rose against him. The State Department countered by sending in 412 United States marines, half of whom were quartered in Brown Brothers' bank. On September 4, 1912, the State Department notified the United States minister at Managua that "the American bankers who have made investments in relation to railroads and steamships in Nicaragua . . . have

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asked for protection." The United States Navy gave it. Eight war vessels, and 2,725 sailors and marines participated in the war on the revolutionists. Managua was bombarded and the United States forces took part in several land engagements. Finally the leader of the revolution surrendered to the United States forces and was exiled to Panama on board the United States war vessel " Cleveland."

The expenses incurred during the revolution led Diaz to apply for another loan. The loan was made in 1913. Under the agreement railroad and bank property were pledged as collateral by the Nicaraguan Government. The bank and railroad were each to have nine directors of whom six were to be named by the bankers, one by the United States Secretary of State and two by Nicaragua. At the same time the State Department was negotiating for a canal route through Nicaragua for which the United States would pay $3,000,000. This arrangement was concluded under the Bryan-Chamorro Treaty of 1913, which provided for the canal, for the United States control of Great Corn and Little Corn Island, and for a United States naval base on the Gulf of Fonseca.

After 1913 the conservative elements in Nicaragua enjoyed the protection of the United States State Department and of the United States Navy. United States marines remained in Nicaragua from 1912 to 1925.

At the election in 1924 Solorzano, Liberal, received 48,072 votes against 28,760 for Chamarro, Conservative. This placed the Liberal Party in power and gave the Administration a definitely anti-United States slant.

In August, 1925, United States marines were withdrawn from Nicaragua. Two months later General Chamarro, defeated candidate in the 1924 election, engineered a *coup d'etat* and forced President Solorzano to appoint him minister of war and chief of the army. He also had himself elected senator, and forced Congress to unseat nineteen Liberals and to replace them with candidates who had been defeated in the 1924 election. The Congress, remodelled to Chamarro's taste, then banished the Vice-President, Sacasa, and put Chamarro in his place. When President Solorzano resigned on January 17, 1926, General Chamarro therefore assumed executive power.

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In May, 1926, the Liberals began a revolution and captured Bluefields. United States marines immediately landed and declared the port a neutral zone. In the subsequent fighting the Liberals had all the best of it. In October, 1926, Adolfo Diaz, Conservative, was chosen President by the National Assembly, and immediately launched a publicity campaign in which he charged Mexico with carrying on Bolshevist propaganda in Nicaragua and with supplying arms to the Liberals. Diaz was promptly recognised by the United States; was supplied with marines and airplanes; was backed by a dozen United States battleships, and by a United States admiral who took possession of the Liberal capital and ordered the Liberal army to surrender its arms or get out.

As early as 1917 United States histories began to appear with Cuba, Haiti, Santo Domingo, Nicaragua, and Panama listed as "protectorates" of the United States. In legal theory each was still a sovereign state. Each had a constitution and a governmental machine. Each was eligible to join the League of Nations. But all five of these countries had imported capital from the United States, and all five of them under the pressure of the State Department and of the United States Navy had signed treaties or adopted constitutions which placed the control of customs, of the financial system or of some other aspect of local government under the political domination of Washington.

The method varied from one case to another. The result was the same. In the first instance capital was invested by United States business houses in some of the natural resources, in railroads, in plantations, or in some other business enterprise. From these investments political control followed. When it did not follow fast enough, it was usually assisted by the United States Navy.

Most of this imperialist development of the United States in the Caribbean took place after 1900. After 1914, and especially after the conclusion of the World War it went on at an accelerated pace. Surplus was accumulating rapidly in the hands of United States bankers; the demand for Caribbean products was growing; the need for a second canal across the Isthmus was becoming evident; the expansion of the American Empire across the Caribbean was a matter of course.

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LABOUR CONDITIONS IN WESTERN CANADA

By A. MILLER

WESTERN CANADA has a labour situation peculiar to itself: in no other civilised country are the workers so heavily handicapped in their efforts to build organisations for their own protection. To the west is a vast reservoir of cheap labour (China and Japan) which Canada can practically tap at will; from the east come annually hundreds of thousands of Northern Europeans, pouring into the country as fast as ship can take them—different nationalities, with different ideas, different trade technique, the great majority of them thrown on a common market to sell their labour-power as best they may.

The bulk of this stream flows beyond Winnipeg to points west, and, though partially absorbed in the various farming districts, it mainly merges into the large floating population, continually on the move, between Winnipeg and Vancouver.

The new-comer's first step is to look up some of his own people, speaking his own language, with a view to getting the ever-necessary job. As a rule jobs are scarce, and being a stranger in a strange land, among people whose ways and language he does not understand, he is invariably forced by economic conditions to take anything in the way of work that he can get, usually at a few cents an hour less than average. Generally in periods of "prosperity" he and his fellows remain above the poverty line; but in times of depression—between seed-time and harvest, harvest and seed-time—many of them drift into the ranks of Canada's huge army of migratory labour, hopelessly begging their way from one casual job to another.

* * * *

In British Columbia the Chinese and Japanese workers for years have laboured for a much lower scale of wages than the whites. So long as they were satisfied to be exploited, all was well. As time passed, however, many of them started into business for themselves, and, with the keen Oriental methods of developing

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any industry they may engage in, are now gradually forcing the small white trader—who cannot hold his own against big business—into the ranks of the unemployed.

These small traders raised a cry of "unfair competition" and "Oriental menace," and made such a fuss "lobbying" at Victoria that they induced the Provincial Government to promulgate a minimum-wage law (forty cents per hour for all males employed in the lumber industry), supposed to take effect from November 1, 1926, with the intention of eliminating the Oriental from the lumber industry.

For many generations the white population of the world has exploited, wholesale, the coloured people: not only by using them as a source of cheap labour, but also indirectly by means of trading machine-made products against hand-made products on the world's market (the products of dead labour-power congealed in machinery, the products resulting from the released energies of oil, water-power, &c., traded for the products of hand-labour, foodstuffs, rice, raw rubber, &c.). The benefits of this exploitation are enjoyed by the white workers as well as the capitalists. This is quite evident in Britain, the head office of a great colonial empire. It is a well-established fact that British labour receives a fraction more than its rightful share of the world's variable capital; this fraction is filched from the rice-bowl of the coloured coolie.

In British Columbia the same applies: owing to the low wages of the Chinese, Japanese, and Hindu workers, the local millowners could, and did, pay a higher wage to their white workers than the labour market warranted (reserve of white labour).

Since the Provincial Government insists on enforcing this minimum-wage law, the employers in various sawmills, in order to meet this increase, have reduced the wages of the white workers, forcing a strike. The white workers in their extremity seek the co-operation of the Asiatic workers; but these same Asiatic workers have had dealings with the whites before, and have found them—in labour disputes between Orientals and employers—wanting. So far (November 28) the Orientals have refused to take action.

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The problem is interesting from a sociological and economic view-point: either the Oriental worker must rise to the white workers' standard of living or the white worker must sink to a bare subsistence level.

Some years ago, when workers' councils were springing up all over the country, many representatives of Chinese and Japanese labour bodies sat in these councils, but when they saw the chaotic state of the white workers' organisations they regretfully withdrew. Since then the view-point of both Oriental and white has been broadened and there is a more tolerant and sympathetic understanding between them. The Chinese and Japanese labour associations are very strong, and are ready—on any issue affecting their own workers—to take action at a moment's notice. The local white labour groups are lamentably weak, and though possessing a fairly virile Left Wing, this minority has not sufficient backing to enforce its ideas. Therefore, instead of white labour taking control of the situation and demanding the same wage scale for all men doing the same class of work, irrespective of nationality or colour, they have left this brilliant move for the "boss" to flounder on. The Provincial Government does not yet see its "mistake": the Oriental is a far better union man than the white, and in certain industries more steady and reliable. From now on he will demand, and get, all the wages the traffic will bear.

* * * *

Though the Pacific Coast will see the last dying flurries of the system, at present the capitalist machine is racing, to use a mechanical expression, with the governor off (production has doubled within the last ten years), yet the labouring population appears to be entirely indifferent to its own welfare. The small farmers, the largest body of workers in the country, are just beginning to feel the need of a union. There is little cohesion between the organised labour groups, very often an exaggerated friction over the merest trifles. At present there is a temporary harmony in the heavy industries (railroads) over the prospective fight for a wage increase.

At their forty-second annual convention the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada made an interesting discovery. A

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resolution submitted set forth that the employers of the Dominion "are solidly united, being bound together by a solidarity of interest and organisation," and further stated that the principal weakness of the Canadian trade union movement "is the fact that our organisations are divided along sectional, national, international, independent, and even religious denominational lines." They might have added that the bulk of the workers do not hold a card in any labour organisation.

The strongest body of Canadian labour is the American Federation of Labour. Its branches are composed, particularly in the west, of small, gradually decreasing craft unions, whose officials busy themselves with petty co-operation schemes for the benefit of the employers and sedulously strangle any progressive move of the rank and file. Some of the units are only a step removed from job-monopoly trusts: their programmes range perilously near to those of company unions. The bureaucratic machines are strong, and are aided in their machinations against the advancing minority in the various local bodies by the main organisation on the American side, creating a chaotic and indifferent attitude towards unionism in the minds of the few workers who are organised.

Weak though this section of Canadian labour is, it is far more aggressive than the parent body to the south. In many places there is a tendency to break away; throughout the country there is a strong feeling that autonomy for Canadian labour would do much to energise and rebuild the movement.

Undoubtedly a break will occur in the near future; many of the advanced workers are concentrating their energies on the rebuilding of this almost reactionary organisation, with the intention of changing the constitution to include workers of all nationalities, to break down the barriers of race prejudice, to forge the various units into a weapon of defence against the eternal greed of the masters, and ultimately to use it as a battering-ram to shatter the outposts of capitalism.

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The World of Labour

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INTERNATIONAL

The League against Imperialism and for National Independence

THE Foundation Congress of the *League against Imperialism and for National Independence* was held in Brussels, February 10 to 15. It was attended by 175 delegates representing organisations in thirty-seven countries. More than 100 of the delegates came from Eastern countries, no less than twenty-one coming from China alone. The organisations directly represented by mandated delegates included the National Revolutionary Army of China, the Chinese Trade Union Congress, the Executive Committee of the Kuomintang, the All-India National Congress, the Egyptian Nationalist Party, the South African Trade Union Congress, the Persian Revolutionary Republican Party, the Syrian Revolutionary Party, the African Committee for the Defence of the Negro Race, the Nationalist Movement of Indonesia, the American Civil Liberties Union, &c.

During the sessions of the Congress a number of important and stirring speeches, dealing with the position of the oppressed peoples in the colonial and semi-colonial countries and the practical tasks of the world-wide struggle against imperialism and for national independence, were made by prominent leaders of the movements in the countries represented.

The Agenda of the Conference comprised the following items :—

(1) Opening address.

(2) Imperialism and its consequences in the colonial and semi-colonial countries.

(3) Imperialism and the danger of wars.

(4) Co-operation between the national liberation movements in oppressed countries and the Labour and anti-imperialist movements in the imperialist countries.

(5) Co-ordination of the national emancipation movements with the Labour Movements of all countries, colonial as well as imperialist.

(6) Establishment of a permanent world-wide organisation linking up all forces against imperialism and colonial oppression.

The Congress issued a lengthy manifesto on the world situation which made necessary the formation of the League against Imperialism. It concludes with the declaration :—

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We announce to all oppressed peoples and all oppressed classes of the dominating nations the foundation of this League. We appeal to all who do not profit from the oppression of others, and who do not live on the fruits of the oppression, and to all who hate modern slavery and are longing for their own freedom and the freedom of their fellow men, to affiliate to us and to support us.

The Resolution on Imperialism

One of the most important resolutions adopted by the Congress was that defining its attitude and general policy towards imperialism. The main portion of this resolution is as follows :—

The Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism is of the opinion that capitalist foreign policy, by its very essence, can only end in the enslavement, forced labour, and extermination of the native population of the Colonial territories.

Imperialism is not an accidental phenomena, from which capitalism can rid itself of its own volition, it is the logical sequence of historical development. But finance capitalism which is economically and politically dominant in the capitalist mother countries is attaining direct profits through the exploitation of the native workers on the one hand and colossal profits through its domination of the sources of raw materials on the other.

The overwhelming majority of the working class in the imperialist countries do not participate in these extra profits, only small portions are thrown away by the capitalists to corrupt a small section of the working class. The situation of the working class in the mother countries is tremendously affected by the unlimited exploitation of colonial territories.

At present we are faced with two principal kinds of exploited colonial territories :—

(1) Completely subjected countries which are governed by the motherland through its colonial bureaucracy.

(2) Nominally independent countries, but which have been brought into actual dependence upon the imperialist powers through treaties forced upon them, and which represent a state of equal exploitation.

In direct opposition to the various forms of colonial suppression and exploitation, this congress demands that the national right of self-determination, which is only piously professed by the so-called League of Nations, should be realised through the complete liberation of all colonial nations and the immediate abrogation of all treaties not founded on the basis of equal rights.

In support of this demand the Congress also rejects any new acquisition of colonial countries by imperialist states as well as any new distribution of colonial mandates amongst States which at present do not possess any colonies, and amongst States which have lost their colonies; neither can any State or private capitalist derive special rights out of the fact that the capitalists of a foreign State have invested capital in the countries which are nominally still independent.

The most eminent representatives of the progressive European and American colonial world support this demand.

The Congress Against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism is called upon to cement the alliance of the struggling workers, peasants, small proprietors and intellectuals on the one hand, and a more comprehensive alliance between these sections of society and the class-conscious workers of the whole world on the other.

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The representatives of working-class organisations participating in this Congress declare that they will not limit themselves to declarations of sympathy for the colonial fighters for liberty nor to resolutions of protest against the violence of the imperialist oppressors. We must organise our forces to prepare to take mass action. In the event of an imperialist state attempting to overthrow by force the liberation movement of colonial or dependent nations the representatives of organisations who are supporting this resolution must take the initiative and organise strikes, especially of transport workers against the despatch of troops and war material to the countries which have been compelled to resist the onslaught of the imperialist powers.

If such means are not sufficient to attain our objective, the working class must use the weapon of the General Strike to help liberate the subject nation. The representatives of colonial and dependent nations declare that they will transform the struggle against imperialism into mass action of the working class of their country. Further, they declare that in the event of an army intervening on behalf of an imperialist power, they will boycott them politically and economically and will intervene in favour of the menaced brother nation, which is struggling to defend itself.

This resolution applies at present especially to China. Our cry to all enemies of imperialist and capitalist exploitation is: " Join us and help transform our demands into action."

A further resolution on the united front in the struggle for emancipation of the oppressed nations deals with the alliance of the various national and working-class movements in the joint struggle against imperialism. It declares that the aim of every national emancipation movement worthy of the name must be to attain full political, economic, cultural and military autonomy.

Organisation of the League

The following statutes for the organisation of the League were adopted by the Congress :—

(1) The organisations and delegations united in the Brussels Congress against Imperialism and for National Independence decide to found an International Union against Imperialism and for National Independence.

(2) The name of the International union shall be the *League against Imperialism and for National Independence.*

(3) All organisations, all parties, trade-unions and persons who lead an earnest struggle against capitalist imperialist domination for the self-determination of all nations, for the national liberty of all peoples, for the equal rights of all classes and all men, shall be allowed to affiliate to the " League against Imperialism and for National Independence."

(4) The Congress Presidium which has been elected as the Provisional Executive Committee until the next Congress is charged with the working out of a Programme and Statutes for the " League against Imperialism and for National Independence." Both drafts must be submitted to all affiliated organisations for discussion at least three months before the new Congress.

(5) The Congress Presidium, constituted as Provisional Executive Committee, will be charged with the administration of the " League Against Imperialism and for National Independence."

(6) The Executive Committee will elect a Bureau consisting of seven members, of whom three will act as secretaries. The three secretaries as well as the whole Bureau are under the control of the Executive Committee and will

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be elected at every Congress. In consideration of the importance of the Chinese-Indian struggle for emancipation and in consideration of the importance of the British Empire in connection with these movements, the Executive Committee decides that until the next Congress these secretaries shall be: one Chinese, one Indian, and a British representative. The other four members of the Bureau shall represent other groups of countries.

(7) The residence of the Bureau shall be decided by the Bureau and shall be the nearest to the greatest national movements for emancipation and in a country which guarantees the smoothest possible working of the Bureau. It is proposed that the headquarters shall next be situated at Paris.

(8) The Congress charges the Executive Committee and the Bureau with the organisation and conduct of agitation and propaganda on a broad scale against all forms of oppression of nations and mankind.

(9) The Bureau shall collect materials on the results of imperialist oppression in the different countries and it shall, by lectures, manifestoes and exhibitions in the capitalist countries, awaken the will among the manual and intellectual workers to support national and social struggles for emancipation of the oppressed peoples.

(10) The Bureau shall create in the most important centres of the imperialist movement—Latin-America, China, India, South and North Africa, and Egypt—branches which are to maintain permanent relations with the headquarters, and after agreement will lead their work of agitation and organisation for the "League against Imperialism and for National Independence." The branches shall be formed of members chosen according to the same principle as the members of the headquarters.

(11) At the beginning, the Executive Committee and the Bureau will rely in their activities upon the individual members until branches of the League have been formed and can undertake the function of such organisations. The Executive and the Bureau are charged with the undertaking of all necessary steps to create in all countries branches of the "League against Imperialism and for National Independence." The aim shall be to unite all similar organisations already in existence, for instance, the "Hands off China" Committee, the "Hands off Russia" committees, "Committees for Syria," "Committees for Morocco" the "League against Colonial Exploitation" and the "Anti-imperialist League," in the newly-created "League against Imperialism and for National Independence."

(12) All organisations or unions affiliated to the "International League against Imperialism and for National Independence," pledge themselves to support the League with all their power and to make a yearly contribution to the Bureau, according to their membership and financial strength.

(13) The Executive Committee is empowered to extend its membership by co-opting representatives of newly-formed sections of the League, as well as of representatives of working-class organisations and unions which have newly entered the League and recognised the decisions of the Brussels Congress.

(14) If in connection with the national movements for freedom, war complications should arise, or if imperialist States should attempt to suppress by force efforts to attain national freedom, the Executive Committee will, in view of the special circumstances, determine the extent and the methods of the action of solidarity in order to bring effective support to the threatened organisations. In such cases of imminent danger the Executive Committee shall be empowered to place itself in communication with trade unions and with political workers' Internationals in order to being about mass-action of solidarity embracing all workers and peasants.

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The following persons were elected as members of the Executive Committee: George Lansbury, M.P., president (Great Britain); H. Liau (China); Jawarlal Nehru (India); Mohamed Hatta (Indonesia); Lamine Senghor (Negro race); W. Munzenberg (Germany); Marteaux (Belgium); Edo Fimmen (Holland); Manuel Ugarte (Latin America); Henri Barbusse (France). Roger Baldwin (U.S.A.), R. Bridgman (Britain), and Gibarti (Germany) were elected as supplementary members.

Joint Declaration of British India and Chinese Delegates

Apart from the resolutions passed by the whole Congress (including those dealing with the national movements in particular countries, such as China, India, Indonesia, &c.), there were two especially important declarations issued by groups of delegates at the Congress. The first of these was a joint declaration of the British, Indian, and Chinese delegates in the following form :—

We, the undersigned members of the British, Indian and Chinese delegations, consider that the task of all working-class forces in imperialist countries is

(1) To fight for full emancipation side by side with the national forces in oppressed countries in order to secure complete independence wherever such national forces so desire.
(2) To oppose all forms of coercion against colonial peoples.
(3) To vote against all credits, naval, military, and air, for the maintenance of armed force to be used against oppressed nations.
(4) To expose the horrors of imperialism to the civil and military populations.
(5) To expose inperialistic policy in the light of the working-class struggle for freedom.

In Relation to the Immediate Situation in China

(1) We demand the immediate withdrawal of all armed forces from Chinese territory and waters.
(2) We urge the need of direct action, including strikes and the imposition of the embargo to prevent movements of munitions and troops either to India or China and from India to China.
(3) That estimates relating either to warlike preparations or to war shall be voted against.
(4) That in the event of armed intervention or open war, every effort shall be made within the Labour Movement to use every weapon possible in the working-class struggle to prevent hostilities.
(5) We demand the unconditional recognition of the Nationalist Government, the abolition of the unequal treaties and of extra-territorial rights and the surrender of foreign concessions.
(6) Finally, in the interests of the Trade Union and Labour Movements in Britain, India and China, we pledge ourselves to work for their immediate close and active co-operation.

G. Lansbury, M.P.
Ellen Wilkinson, M.P.
John Beckett, M.P.
Fenner Brockway (I.L.P.)
John Stokes, J.P.
Harry Pollitt.
A. McManus.
W. Rust.
H. Liau (E.C. of Kuomintang.)
Lu Chung Ling (General of Canton Army).
Jawarlal Nehru (Indian National Congress).
S. O. Davies.
R. Bridgman.
Helen Crawfurd.

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Resolution of the Trade Union Delegates

The second important declaration was that of the Trade Union delegates in favour of trade-union Unity and calling for strike action against war on China. The resolution declared :—

> The undersigned delegates representing seventeen trade union organisations with 7,962,000 members of all races and taking part in the International Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism held in Brussels from February 10 to 15, hereby declare their complete solidarity with all the oppressed people of the world struggling for their liberation from the yoke of imperialism, and pledge themselves to support them with all their strength and with all the means in their power.
>
> At the moment when British imperialists are daily increasing the dispatch and the transport of arms, ammunition, war material and troops to China, at a moment when they are sending out their airplanes and battleships to crush the Chinese revolution, the undersigned representatives affirm that the only effective means for the people of the oppressing countries to prevent the imperialist war which is being prepared, is the preparation and the international organisation of the boycott against the transport of arms and ammunition, and of the general strike.
>
> To this end it is necessary to undertake in each country an active campaign for popularising the adoption of partial strikes and of the General Strike. The decisions taken and resolutions passed by the Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism should be published in the Trade Union Press of the whole world and widely circulated among the workers in the towns and in the country.
>
> In view of the permanent threat of wars created by the rivalries of the great imperialist powers in the world, and in order to give effective support to the struggle of the peoples for the right of free self-determination, the trade-union delegates to the Congress against Colonial Oppression and Imperialism declare that International trade-union solidarity is more indispensable now than ever. They appeal to the Federation of Trade Unions of Amsterdam, to the Red International of Trade Unions of Moscow as well as to all the other organisations not affiliated to the existing Internationals, and demand, in the name of the 7,962,000 trade unionists whom they represent, that an agreement be rapidly arrived at for the creation of a single trade-union International embracing the unions of the five continents and the workers of all races and of all colours.
>
> A single trade-union International alone can constitute a solid dam against which all the attempts to organise imperialist war will be destroyed.
>
> The undersigned representatives urgently call upon the Trade Unions of all countries to put an end definitely to the distinction that still exists between the white and the coloured workers. All workers without distinction should be grouped locally, nationally and internationally in the same trade-union organisations.
>
> The trade-union right of coalition, of assembly, of strike, of freedom of speech, and of the Press must be obtained for all the workers of colonial and semi-colonial countries.
>
> While the workers of the countries under the domination of imperialism should not forget that the right of union has to be won by severe struggle, the workers and unions of the imperialist countries must also fight energetically to wrest this right from their respective capitalists for the workers and peasants of the colonies.

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The division into races, colours, and categories of workers, the divisions between trade-union organisations nationally and internationally, merely serve the interests of the capitalists and imperialists, who are enabled to continue their domination solely by reason of this division and of the unorganised condition of far too large a number of workers.

The General Council of the I.F.T.U.

THE last meeting of the General Council of the I.F.T.U. was held at Amsterdam on January 12-14. The chief subject discussed was that of relations with the Russian unions, which had previously been raised in February and December, 1925.[1] This discussion followed the controversy of the previous week in the *Daily Herald* started by Mr. Citrine's attack on Losovsky. Mr. Citrine, though not a delegate, was present at the meetings.

The proposal of the British delegates, moved by Mr. Geo. Hicks, was that:—

> The General Council of the I.F.T.U., having regard to the repeated and earnest request of the British T.U.C. and the imperative need for a united international trade union movement, agrees to the convening of a conference, without preliminary conditions being laid down by either side, it being distinctly understood that such a conference would be confined to representatives of the I.F.T.U. and of the All-Russian Central Council of Trade Unions.

Mr. Hicks, in moving the resolution, gave three chief reasons:—

(1) That it was the policy of the I.F.T.U. to promote world trade union unity.
(2) That unity is necessary to overcome the difficulty of getting in the Australian, South African, and Indian unions.
(3) That unity is necessary in resisting the attack on labour standards and to prevent war.

Immediately after this speech M. Stenhuis (Dutch) moved the closure and the vote was taken without further discussion. The motion was lost by six votes to twelve.

Through the President, Mr. A. A. Purcell, the I.F.T.U. was thanked for financial help to the British miners during the lock-out.

On the question of Mexico, the General Council passed the following resolution:—

> The General Council of the I.F.T.U. is watching with keen interest events in Mexico. Our sympathies are with the Mexican people and their Government. We assure the Mexican people of the support of the international organised Labour Movement in resisting acts of foreign aggression and interference.

The application for affiliation of the Industrial and Commercial Workers' Union of South Africa, covering 40,000 coloured workers, was accepted, with the provision that if a joint centre of white and coloured workers was set up in South Africa the union could affiliate to that centre. The affiliation of the International Amalgamated Workers' Association of South Africa was ended, as the union has not paid dues for some years. Also affiliation of the newly created Lithuanian centre, covering 18,486 members, was accepted and the I.L.O. is to be asked to make an inquiry into conditions in Lithuania.

[1] See LABOUR MONTHLY, April, 1925, p. 234, and January, 1926, p. 59.

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BOOK REVIEW

THE GENERAL STRIKE AGAIN

The British Public and the General Strike. By Kingsley Martin. (The Hogarth Press, 3s. 6d.)

A Workers' History of the General Strike. By R. W. Postgate, Ellen Wilkinson, M.P., and J. F. Horrabin. (Plebs League, 162 Buckingham Palace Road, London, 1s.)

APART from a book on road transport by Mr. George Glasgow, Mr. Kingsley Martin's book on the General Strike is the first to be published by an author having no ostensible connection with any section of the Labour Movement.

It is rather a book about certain aspects of the General Strike than about the Strike itself, and as such is packed with acute and witty observations. The book commences with a reference to the columns of self-congratulations which appeared in the capitalist Press at the end of the General Strike. As the author says:—

> There was general agreement that the end of the General Strike was a proper moment for a mutual exchange of bouquets. The newspapers agreed that there had been a fight, but many of them insisted that owing to the peculiarities of the British national character there had not been any combatants who could be specified or any victory that was wise to mention. . . . Mr. Btldwin declared that the end of the strike was a victory not for any part of the nation, but for " common sense," while Mr. Thomas was glad to find that, although both sides had " shown themselves warriors," there had been no vanquished and no victors.

Mr. Martin goes on to discuss the " common sense of the British people " which is alleged to have brought the General Strike to a satisfactory conclusion without undesirable incidents.

> Frequently we boast of being " illogical " and of possessing a practical instinct amounting to genius. " This appears to be that English people prefer to face a problem rather in terms of power than in terms of philosophy. . . . English social history is the history of gradual concessions, extorted from the ruling classes after protracted struggles, usually fought on irrevelant issues."

The question has to be answered, however, how the General Strike came at all in face of the highly developed machinery for conciliation which the employing class had built up in the course of a century, and the explanation offered by Mr. Martin certainly suggests that he has a keener insight into social realities than many people posing as leaders of the Labour Movement. He says:—

> Under these circumstances how are we to explain the fact that in 1926, as one Cabinet Minister has said, England found itself nearer to civil war than at any time since the seventeenth century ? A complete answer would be a very complex one. The nineteenth century was a period of "increasing returns " in England ; national prosperity increased even faster than population, because England's place in the commerce of the world was a supreme one . . . In the twentieth century England no longer holds this proud position. Our population

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> is dependent upon an export trade which is not likely altogether to recover. The war, and still more the peace, have accelerated a decline already noticeable before 1914, and to-day great organisations struggle for decreasing profits. Capitalism, the vague word we use for an unorganised method of supplying the goods and services of society, seems progressively incapable of satisfying our needs. The problem that arises cannot be settled by common sense; a concession here or a strike defeated there does nothing to solve it.

That betrays at least a reasonably clear understanding of the background of the General Strike, which must be grasped if the place of the General Strike in the political development of Great Britain is to be understood.

The question of the nature of the Strike itself has, of course, been widely discussed in the Labour Movement, and Mr. Martin's opinion is given as follows:—

> The difference between the sympathetic and the peaceful General Strike and the revolutionary strike is not that one is political and the other industrial. In a highly organised community every large strike affects the "community as a whole," and may necessitate Government interference. . . . The distinction lies not in the scope of the strike, but in the intentions of the strikers. If those who control the strike have a limited objective, the strike is not revolutionary, whether it happens to conform exactly to legal requirements or not. If the objective is to overthrow the constituted method of government and the existing form of social structure, the strike is revolutionary.

The objection to this distinction is that it is entirely static and does not take into consideration the possibility of the development of the first form of the General Strike into the second. In any great revolutionary movement the intention of the mass of participants is often limited at the outset, but the development of the struggle often carries the movement much further than the majority of those participating in it had originally intended, and we are afraid that Mr. Martin somewhat spoils his definitions by trying to erect a Chinese Wall between the one form of the General Strike and the other. In any case both involve a struggle against the capitalist State.

In discussing the situation leading up to the Strike, Mr. Martin divides the working class and the capitalists into roughly four groups—the class-conscious capitalists, the reformist capitalists, the Labour reformists, and the class-conscious workers.

That there are superficial grounds for the distinctions here noted is doubtless true, but Mr. Martin's analysis of the tendencies of those groups is the most unsatisfactory feature of the book. It is true that there are differences in the capitalist ranks, between, say, Mr. Evan Williams and Sir Herbert Samuel. It does not follow, however, that Sir Herbert Samuel is less class-conscious than Mr. Williams; it only means that he represents a slightly different grouping of economic interests.

Nor do we think that Mr. Martin's description of the aims of the Labour reformists—the peaceful attainment of Socialism, &c.—is quite accurate. If the classification is worth making at all on the basis of our General Strike experiences, it would justify us linking the Labour reformist leaders and the capitalist reformists in the one group, for the whole experience of the General Strike showed that on essential questions—the Coal Commission, the Samuel

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Memorandum, the Bishops' Proposals—there was little difference between those groups.

The chapter on the General Strike and the Constitution is well worth reading, although space forbids us to quote it.

The last chapter deals with the questions of the future and indicates that, in the opinion of the author, at the present moment——

> the omens are all in favour of a revolutionary future for England. . . . At present, it must be admitted, the upper classes are doing their best to fulfil Communist prophecies, and make the revolutionary future for England possible.

Mr. Martin does not like that future. He believes that it may mean "the destruction of civilisation," &c., but he does not seem to be able to indicate any way in which the struggle can be avoided, except perhaps a change of heart. Here obviously the author's sentiments rebel against his reason.

* * * * *

The Plebs text-book has already aroused some controversy, which is likely to develop. This is all to the good: if differences of opinion exist with regard to the General Strike they should be hammered out. What the Labour Movement has to fear is not controversy but the attitude of refusing to discuss our experiences on the plea of letting bygones be bygones.

The book is divided into four parts. Parts 1 and 3 are written by J. F. Horrabin and Ellen Wilkinson, and Parts 2 and 4 by R. W. Postgate. To our mind, the book, while containing new material, is an unsatisfactory production. No attempt is made to indicate the economic and political developments which led up to the General Strike, and what features created the outlook among the workers which made their response to the Strike so great as it was. This is a mistake. One must examine the General Strike in relation to the previous developments or one can neither understand the General Strike nor the controversies which have arisen out of it.

The first chapter of the book deals with the period of the truce between Red Friday and the Strike itself. The Government's preparations are specified, as is also the refusal of the T.U.C. to consider the question of preparations as an urgent one. The Coal Commission is mentioned, but no indication is given of the rôle of that body in the Government's campaign of preparations. Was it one of the weapons of the Government's attack upon the miners or was it an impartial body? The Plebs book does not tell us what in the opinion of the authors was its purpose. This is a very important point, as will be seen when we come to deal with the question of the Samuel Memorandum.

In regard to the T.U.C.'s refusal to prepare, this is explained as being due to the reinforcement of the right wing on the General Council and "a not unnatural spirit of optimism of the left leaders on the General Council due to the all-too-easy victory of July."

It is difficult to accept this explanation of the attitude of the left leaders. A few days after Red Friday, Baldwin definitely threatened the T.U. Movement in the House of Commons. His threats were replied to both by Bromley and Purcell. The Government's preparations were perfectly obvious to those leaders, and it is difficult to see how they could have acquired their optimism as to the possibilities of an easy victory for the workers in a future

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struggle. To our mind, the truth is that immediately the Government began preparations to defeat the workers if they supported the miners, the left leaders, like the right, showed themselves in many cases anxious to avoid a conflict by inducing the miners to surrender.

Part 3 is a continuation of the narrative, so far as negotiations are concerned, by the same authors. The story of the negotiations is told, and then comes the following passage which appears to us to be nothing less than a defence of the attitude of the General Council :—

> Nothing is easier than to be wise after the event, but no one who reads the terms of this Memorandum in the light of all that has happened since can help doubting whether the miners were wise in their rejection of it. If anything, it was more favourable to them than the draft proposal which their own officials signed at the House of Commons on May 3 (although their Executive Committee afterwards did not endorse their action). However loyal they might be to them, the organised workers in non-blackleg-proof industries were not in a position to fight as long as the miners. While it was true that the General Council could give no written guarantee that the Government would accept these terms, yet had the miners accepted them in good faith, the General Strike could have terminated in such a way as to leave the miners' supporters full of enthusiasm, and it is doubtful whether any Government could have faced, *at this time*, the consequences of rejecting them.

The only meaning of this is that the miners should have accepted unspecified reductions in wages—for such was the meaning of the Samuel Memorandum—and gone back to work. The defeat of the General Strike in these circumstances would have been more complete than it was. The employers, having smashed the miners, could have smashed the rest of the working class quite easily, and reduced the Trade Union Movement to impotence in a very quick time. It was the miners' continuance of the struggle which exhausted the capitalist class to a considerable extent, and has for the moment gained a breathing space for other sections of workers.

The view expressed in the above quotation is substantially the same as that of the General Council, and one wonders how the authors bring this view in harmony with the passages in other parts of the book. For instance, on page 87, Mr. Postgate in describing the calling off of the General Strike says :—

> There was a dramatic scene in many strike committee rooms, as at Nottingham, where the committee members, while they could hear their sellers selling their own " victory bulletins " in the street, slowly realised that the true story was one of ignominious defeat.

If, however, the terms of the Samuel Memorandum were worthy of acceptance, and if it was a satisfactory termination to the General Strike, then the question of ignominious defeat does not arise. Ignominious defeat has only meaning provided one regards the Samuel Memorandum itself as a document in which were embodied terms of defeat.

The defence of the Samuel Memorandum reads strangely when one comes to the end of the book and reads the summing-up :—

> Two main issues which must be faced, and faced forthwith, by the working class movement remain after all discussion. Both the General Council and the miners made a serious blunder in not defining exactly the terms and

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> conditions on which the miners handed over the conduct of their dispute to the General Council when the General Strike was called. Secondly, and this is of far deeper significance than any questions of tactics or of organisation, the outlook of many of the most influential trade union leaders does not take into account the realities of the post-war struggle. It is not a question of "incapacity," still less of "treachery"; it is the refusal to realise that the whole working class is engaged in a bitter struggle for its standards of life in which no quarter will be given by the other side.

If, however, the terms of the Samuel Memorandum on which the Strike was called off are such that "no one can help doubting . . . whether the miners were wise in their rejection of it," one cannot also help doubting whether the strictures on the General Council are justified, because any defence of the Samuel Memorandum is a defence of the leadership of the General Council, and if the Samuel Memorandum was a worthy document the General Council was a worthy leadership.

The Plebs text-book, like a good W.E.A. publication, is facing both ways, and trying to please everybody. It is impartial, but it is not candid.

Nor is it clear in its conclusions which we have just quoted as to the leadership. Too much is made of the failure of the miners and the General Council to define the terms and conditions on which the miners handed over the conduct of the dispute. The fundamental difference between the General Council and the miners was not that they were confused as to the rights of their respective bodies in the conduct of the dispute, but that the General Council stood definitely on the side of the capitalists and the Government for a reduction of miners' wages, while the miners were determined to resist any encroachments on their standard of life.

To regard the issue as a mere muddle between two trade union bodies as to their rights and functions is to obscure the deeper divergences of policy between the miners and the General Council. The General Council, like the Government and the mine-owners, favoured reductions in wages. The miners did not. The book recognises this fact, but does not recognise that this divergence of aim was the real cause of the division between the miners and the General Council, and not any question of the respective functions of the General Council and the miners in the Strike.

Nor do we understand what is meant by saying that the outlook of the trade union leaders "does not take into account the realities of the post-war struggle" and then adding, "It is not a question of incapacity." Surely the inability of a leadership to take into account the realities of a struggle is itself a classic example of incapacity!

To argue otherwise, as the book does, is like saying, "During the great war, Sir John French was not incapable; he merely thought that the Germans ought to have been fought on the same lines as were the Boers."

What is "the refusal to realise that the whole working class is engaged in a bitter struggle" but treachery?

One must agree, however, with the subsequent remarks of this chapter that "the corpse at the inquest was not the theory of the General Strike, but the nineteenth-century trade union leadership, which refused to face up to the class issues involved in the miners' struggle."

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It is therefore unfortunate that the disembodied spirit of this corpse has influenced the Plebs text-book as it has done.

Parts 2 and 4 of the book deal with the developments of the Strike itself. and are well done, although now and then Mr. Postgate goes out of his way to have a malicious dig at the Communist Party, as in the assertion that the headquarters of the Communist Party were an exception to the discipline of the workers in that they attacked the General Council.

This is a sheer confusion of thought. The Communist Party did nothing to injure the discipline of the workers on strike, but did everything possible to maintain that discipline. It, however, saw that the leaders were preparing to betray the strike, and endeavoured to warn the workers in time. The breach of discipline—if one can call treachery by so soft a name—was on the part of the General Council and not on the part of the Communist Party.

There is, however, interesting material in this portion of the book, although why a book to which an eminent authority on geography has contributed should place the Vale of Leven in Fife we do not know.

In the bibliography attached to the book most of the previous books on the General Strike are slighted. Mr. Burns' book " is prefaced by the author's comments and his instructions for the next General Strike." Mr. J. T. Murphy's book " is devoted to proving the correctness of the Communist Party, facts being selected in accordance with this aim."

Mr. R. P. Arnot's book " is biased by a desire to enhance the part played by the Communist Party." Mr. A. J. Cook's pamphlet " is written under stress of deep emotion against the General Council."

The Plebs book is issued after all these others, and might have avoided the defects that its authors noticed elsewhere. We cannot say that it has done so, or that a book worthy of the theme and of the material has been written. Certain parts of the book will doubtless be found useful, but it is as well for the reputation of the Plebs League that it does not accept responsibility for the book.

J.R.C.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Nationalise the Railways. By F. E. Lawley, B.A. (I.L.P. Lit. Dept., 16 pp., 2d.)

Art and Culture in Relation to Socialism. By Arthur Bourchier. (I.L.P. Lit. Dept., 16 pp., 3d.)

The Coming Time and other Poems. By Bardie McPhee. (Arthur H. Stockwell, Ltd., 20 pp., 1s.)

Hundred Per Cent. Indian. By C. G. Shah. (C. G. Shah, New Era Series No. 1, 57 pp., 6 annas.)

Strike Strategy. By Wm. Z. Foster. (T.U. Educational League, 88 pp., 25 cents.)

The Indian Problem and its Solution. A Letter by the Head of the Ahmadeyja Community to His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India. (31 pp.)

British Imperialism in China. By Elinor Burns. (Labour Research Department, Colonial Series No. 3, 64 pp., 6d.)

The General Strike. By R. Page Arnot, (Labour Research Department, 245 pp., 2s8.)

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Information on the Problem of Security (1917-1926). By J. W. Wheeler-Bennett and F. E. Langermann. With an Introduction by the Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher. (Geo. Allen & Unwin, 10s.)

Thomas Spence and His Connections. By Olive D. Rudkin. (Allen & Unwin, 7s. 6d.)

A Worker's History of the Great Strike. By R. W. Postgate, Ellen Wilkinson, M.P. and J. F. Horrabin. (The Plebs League, 110 pp., 1s.)

Jesus. By Henri Barbusse. (Flammarian, 249 pp., 12 francs.)

Under Fire. By Henri Barbusse. Trans. by Fitzwater Wray. (J. M. Dent & Sons, Everyman, cloth, 298 pp., 2s.)

Background of the Plymouth Trial. By Bartholomeo Vanzetti. (Road to Freedom Group, Boston, 38 pp., 25 cents.)

Bolshevist Russia. By Anton Karlgren. Trans. by Anna Barwell. (Geo. Allen & Unwin, 311 pp., 12s. 6d.)

Thomas More and His Utopia. By Karl Kautsky. Trans. by H. J. Stenning. (A. & C. Black, Ltd., 250 pp., 6s.)

Labour Party, Ltd. A Play of the Year after Next. By George E. Wilkinson. (Auckland Agenda Press, 24 pp., 1s.)

Justice Among Nations. By Horace G. Alexander, M.A. Marrten's Peace Lecture. (Hogarth Press, 58 pp., 1s.)

Russia in 1926. By R. F. and M. G. McWilliams. (J. M. Dent & Sons, 128 pp., 3s. 6d.)

Radek replies in the 'Socialist Review'

This month's *Socialist Review* contains a long article by Karl Radek on Russia's Eastern policy. He asks J. L. Garvin and the British war-mongers to drink a glass of cold water before they write about war with Russia!

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